

New Pilgrimage

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A NEW PILGRIMAGE.

A NEW PILGRIMAGE,

AND OTHER POEMS,

BY

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT,

AUTHOR OF "THE LOVE SONNETS OF PROTEUS," "THE WIND

AND THE WHIRLWIND," "IN VINCULIS,"

ETC., ETC.



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PREFACE.

The poems contained in the present volume belong in part to the Author's literary period of "Proteus", in part to more recent times ; nor will the reader find difficulty in distinguishing between them. All that needs explaining is that the series of Sonnets giving their name to the book were written in the winter of 1886-1887 ; and the Pastorals, which end it, in the past and present years.

So much for the psychology of the volume. With regard to its manner the author would speak more at length.

"Sed nos qui vivimus" and the pieces "from the Arabic" represent an attempt

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made in all diffidence to deal with the difficult problem of assonance, a form of ending which has never been seriously tried in English metres, but which in the author's opinion deserves better attention. Complete success in assonance would doubtless be to produce the illusion of rhyme, or at least to leave the ear satisfied with a half result, as it is (but how rarely !) with the no result of blank verse. For this we in England need education, and the author is not sanguine as to the judgment which will be passed upon his skill. As a suggestion, however, he believes his attempt will be one day considered valuable, and he commends it now to the notice of critics.

Another and more important point which he raises and endeavours to meet, is with regard to the construction of the English sonnet. Our critics seem to have decided

that no form of sonnet is admissible in English other than the Petrarchan, or, at least, that some precedent must be shown in early Italian literature for each variation from it. Against this assumption of finality on a foreign model the author ventures to protest on the double ground that the genius and scope of English rhyme is essentially different from that of the Italian,—and that for the treatment of modern subjects (the only ones, perhaps, of permanent value in any literature) the Italian form lacks elasticity, and so is not the practically best. In the matter of rhyme, its greater redundancy and license in the Italian places the English imitator at a clear disadvantage. The Italian doubleendings, so effective in adding strength, are more difficult with us, and, being so, can only be used sparingly without offence to our ears. Deprived of them the ordinary model

of the Italian sextett becomes poor and monotonous, for it needs a very strong single rhyme to be recognized at its full value after the usual Petrarchan interval. Of course, the author does not assert that these difficulties have not been successfully met by our best English poets. Milton, Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning, Rossetti, are proofs to the contrary. Yet, when you have mentioned these names, there are probably not a hundred English sonnets in strict Petrarchan measure which are not intolerably dull. This surely should not be. How much stronger too becomes our case when modern subjects are approached. Tennyson, the greatest of our living poets, and the most modern in his treatment, gives us hardly a specimen on contemporary subjects of his skill. Browning, William Morris, Longfellow, Lowell are almost equally silent ; Lord Lytton and

Alfred Austin give us a few good ones, and Matthew Arnold has left us a bare half-dozen. Yet why? The sonnet, with the Italian writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was the vehicle of their daily thoughts about their daily affairs, as well as that of their profoundest utterances in religion, love and politics; nor is there any reason beyond the trammels of convention why it should not be so yet with us. It seems to the author that our critics, like the Scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament, are placing on our shoulders a burden heavier than we English poets can bear. By insisting on the mint and cummin of certain rhymes and endings, they have set at nought the intellectual law on which the sonnet rests, and made it of no practical avail.

For this reason the author makes bold in

the present volume to present the reader with two forms in which he conceives the modern English sonnet may be written, violating no law of the Italians essential to modern poetry, and yet with sufficient elbow room to make it a vehicle suited to every subject and every mood of feeling. The first is a metre of fourteen lines—that of the “New Pilgrimage,”—the second a metre of sixteen, for lighter themes, illustrated in the “Idler’s Calendar.”

It will be observed that both these examples follow the same metrical idea. The usual Petrarchan form of the octave, A B B A A B B A, is rejected in favour of the alternative Italian form A B A B B A B A, which to the author’s ear is lighter and more varied, the reversing of the rhyme in the second half of the octave giving it a special bril-

liancy which the other lacks. The author, though he sometimes violates the rule in practice, considers a cæsura at the end of the eighth line, or occasionally deferred to the middle of the ninth, essential to a good sonnet ; and he would include such a cæsura as one of the most important features of his metre. It will also be observed that he allows the exception of a third rhyme in the sixth and eighth lines. He is far from saying that the octave is not more perfect without it, but he has found by experience that many a good sonnet cannot be written except with this indulgence. Next to the last, the first line of every sonnet is of the most importance, and yet there are admirable first lines which by no ingenuity can be provided with three others in rhyme. The sense, therefore, has to be sacrificed, or the line is lost.

With regard to the sextett in the shorter formula, and the second octave in the longer, the author is very distinctly of opinion that a couplet is in English the strongest and most effective form of ending. He believes the weakness of ninety-nine of our sonnets out of a hundred (and that is about the proportion of those annually published) comes from the poverty of the Petrarchan sextett in English, the formula A B C A B C, unaided by double rhymes. Certainly, in lighter subjects the couplet is of the greatest possible use, pointing, and sometimes even suggesting, the epigram which is the sonnet's moral. The author, therefore, adheres to the couplet as the English sonnet writer's most precious inheritance from the greatest of all our sonneteers and poets. Where Shakespeare rejected the Italian sextett in its favour, we moderns surely may stand excused.

After all, the sonnet's "intellectual measure" is the truly important matter. On this the author holds briefly that the sonnet, to be a good one, should contain one conspicuous thought, and only one ; that the first line should foreshadow this, as a musical overture does an opera ; that the octave should supply variations on the suggested theme, images, metaphors, developments ; that the third quartett should fill in and complete the outline, and finally, that the couplet should point the moral. He gives the following as a metrical description of his idea of a perfect English sonnet :—

A PERFECT SONNET.

Oh, for a perfect sonnet of all time !

Wild music, heralding immortal hopes,
Strikes the bold prelude. To it from each clime,
Like tropic birds on some green island slopes,
Thoughts answering come, high metaphors, brave
tropes,

In ordered measure and majestic rhyme.

And, presently, all hearts, of kings and popes,
And peoples, throb to this new theme sublime.

Anon 'tis reason speaks. A note of death

Strengthens the symphony yet fraught with pain,
And men seek meanings with abated breath,

Vexing their souls,—till lo, once more, the strain
Breaks through triumphant, and Love's master voice
Thrills the last phrase and bids all joy rejoice.

CRABBET PARK, SUSSEX.

August 17, 1889.

W. S. B.

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A NEW PILGRIMAGE.

A NEW PILGRIMAGE.

I.

Care killed a cat, and I have cares at home,
Which vex me nightly and disturb my bed.
The things I love have all grown wearisome ;
The things that loved me are estranged or dead.
I have a house most fair, but tenanted
With shadows only, gardens of tall trees,
Fenced in and made secure from every dread
But this one terror, my soul's lack of ease.
I have much wealth of pleasure, horse and hound
Woods broad for sport, and fields that are my
own,
With neighbours of good cheer to greet me round,
And servants tried by whom my will is done.
Here all things live at peace in this dear place,
All but my pride, which goes companionless.

II.

How shall I ransom me? The world without,
Where once I lived in vain expense and noise,
Say, shall it welcome me in this last rout,
Back to its bosom of forgotten joys?
Sometimes I hear it whispering with strange
voice,
Asking, "Are we forever then cast out,
The things that helped thee once in thy annoys,
That thou despairst? Nay, away with doubt!
Take courage to thy heart to heal its woes.
It still shall beat as wildly as a boy's."
This tempts me in the night-time, and I loose
My soul to dalliance with youth's broken toys.
Ay, wherefore suffer? In this question lies
More than my soul can answer, and be wise.

III.

I will break through my bondage. Let me be

Homeless once more, a wanderer on the earth,
Marked with my soul's sole care for company,
Like Cain, lest I do murder on my hearth.

I ask not others' goods—nor wealth nor worth,
Nor the world's kindness, which should comfort me,
But to forget the story of my birth,
And go forth naked of all name, but free.

Where the flowers blow, there let me sit and
dream.

Where the rain falls, ah ! leave my tears their
way.

Where men laugh loud, I too will join the hymn,
And in God's congregation let me pray.

Only alone—I ask this thing—alone,
Where none may know me, or have ever known.

IV.

Behold the deed is done. Here endeth all

That bound my grief to its ancestral ways.

I have passed out, as from a funeral,

From my dead home, and in the great world's
gaze

Henceforth I stand, a pilgrim of new days,

On the high road of life. Where I was thrall,

See, I am master, being passionless ;

And, having nothing now, am lord of all.

How glorious is the world ! Its infinite grace

Surprises me—and not as erst with fear,—

But as one meets a woman face to face,

Loved once and unforgotten and still dear

In certain moods and seasons,—so to me

The fair world smiles to-day, yet leaves me free.

V.

The physical world itself is a fair thing
For who has eyes to see or ears to hear.
To-day I fled on my new freedom's wing,
With the first swallows of the parting year,
Southwards from England. At the Folkestone
pier
I left the burden of my sins behind,
Noting how gay the noon was, and how clear
The tide's fresh laughter rising to no wind.
A hundred souls of men there with my own
Smiled in that sunshine. 'Tis a little measure
Makes glad the heart at sea, and not alone
Do wise men kindle to its pulse of pleasure.
Here all alike, peers, pedlars, squires, and dames
Foreswore their griefs fog-born of Father Thames.

VI.

Away from sorrow ! Yes, indeed, away !

Who said that care behind the horseman sits ?
The train to Paris, as it flies to-day,
Whirls its bold rider clear of ague fits.

Who stops for sorrows—who for his lost wits—
His vanished gold—his loves of yesterday—

His vexed ambitions ? See, the landscape flits
Bright in his face, and fleeter far than they.

Away ! away ! Our mother Earth is wide—

And our poor lives and loves of what avail ?
All life is here—and here we sit astride

On her broad back, with Hope's white wings
for sail,

In search of fortune and that glorious goal,
Paris, the golden city of our soul.

VII.

Ah, Paris, Paris ! What an echo rings
Still in those syllables of vain delight !
What voice of what dead pleasures on what wings
Of Moenad laughter pulsing through the night !
How bravely her streets smile on me—how
bright
Her shops, her houses, fair sepulchral things,
Stored with the sins of men forgotten quite,
The loves of mountebanks, the lusts of kings !
What message has she to me on this day
Of my new life ? Shall I, a pilgrim wan,
Sit at her board and revel at her play,
As in the days of old ? Nay, this is done.
It cannot be ; and yet I love her well
With her broad roads and pleasant paths to hell.

VIII.

I will sit down awhile in dalliance

With my dead life, and dream that it is young.

My earliest memories have their home in France,

The chestnut woods of Bearn and streams among,

Where first I learned to stammer the French
tongue.

Fair ancient France. No railroad insolence

Had mixed her peoples then, and still men clung
Each to his ways, and viewed the world askance.

We, too, as exiles from our northern shore,

Surveyed things sparsely ; and my own child's
scorn

Remained, how long, a rebel to all lore

Save its lost English, nor was quite o'erborne
Till, as I swore I'd speak no French frog's word,
I swore in French, and so laid down my sword.

IX.

These were in truth brave days. From our high
perch,

The box-seat of our travelling chariot, then
We children spied the world 'twas ours to search,
And mocked like birds at manners and at men.
What wonders we beheld, Havre, Rouen, Caen,
The Norman caps, the Breton crowds in church,
The loyal Loire, the valorous Vendéen,
And all the Revolution left in lurch
That very year—things old as Waterloo.—

But when we neared the mountains crowned
with snows,
And heard the torrents roar, our wonder grew
Over our wit, and a new pleasure rose
Wild in our hearts, and stopped our tongues with
dread,
The sense of death and beauty overhead.

X.

Whence is our pleasure in things beautiful ?

We are not born with it, we do not know,
By instinct of the eye or natural rule,

That naked rocks are fairest, or flowers blow
Best in their clefts, or that the world of snow
Has other glory than of cold and ice.

From our mother's hand we viewed these things
below,
Senseless as goats which browse a precipice,
Till we were taught to know them. With what
tears

I con the lessons now I learned so well,
Of mountain shapes, from those dead lips of hers ;
And as she spoke, behold, a miracle
Proving her words,—for at our feet there grew,
Beauty's last prodigy, a gentian blue.

XI.

I have it still, a book with pages sewn
Cross-wise in silk, and brimming with these
flowers,
Treasures we gathered there, long sere and brown,
The ghosts of childhood's first undoubting hours,
Of childhood in the mountains e'er the powers
Of wrong and pain had turned our joys to gall.
That summer stands to me a tower of towers,
To which my gladness clings in spite of all.
There was one special wonder in the hills,
A place where nets were hung from tree to tree
For flights of pigeons. This beyond all else
Touched my boy's fancy for its mystery,
And for the men who, caged aloft on poles,
Scared down the birds, as Satan scares men's
souls.

XII.

Dear royal France ! I fix the happy year
At forty-six, because that Christmas-tide
There passed through Pau the Duke of Mont-
pensier,
Fresh from his nuptials with his Spanish bride ;
And because I, unwilling, shared their pride,
As youngest of the English children there,
By offering flowers to the fair glorified
Daughter of Bourbon standing on the stair—
A point in history. When we came at last
To this gay Paris I was doomed to love,
There were already rumours of the blast
That swept the Orleans songsters from their grove
In flight to London, after Polignac
And the true king, at their King Bourgeois' back.

XIII.

And what strange sights have these three windows
seen,

Mid *bonnes* and children, in the Tuileries !

What flights of hero, Emperor and Queen,

Since first I looked down from them, one of
these !

Here, with his *Mornys* and his *Persignys*,

Louis Napoleon, the Prince President,

Rode one December past us, on the breeze

Of his new glory, bloodstained and intent.

Later, I too my love's diplomacies

Played at Eugenia's court,—blest Empress !

Then

How did men curse her with their *Marseillaise*,

When the foe's horse was watered in her Seine,

And the flames, lit for her last festival,

Licked out her palace and its glories all.

XIV.

To-day there is no cloud upon thy face,
Paris, fair city of romance and doom !
Thy memories do not grieve thee, and no trace
Lives of their tears for us who after come.
All is forgotten—thy high martyrdom,
Thy rage, thy vows, thy vauntings, thy disgrace,
With those who died for thee to beat of drum,
And those who lived to see thee kingdomless.
Indeed thou art a woman in thy mirths,
A woman in thy griefs which leave thee young,
A prudent virgin still, despite the births
Of these sad prodigies thy bards have sung.
What to thy whoredoms is a vanished throne?
A chair where a fool sat, and he is gone !

XV.

For thus it is. You flout at kings to-day.

To-morrow in your pride you shall stoop low
To a new tyrant who shall come your way,
And serve him meekly with mock serious brow,
While the world laughs. I shall not laugh at
you.

Your Bourbon, Bonaparte or Boulanger

Are foils to your own part of "ingenue"
Which moves me most, the moral of your play.
You have a mission in the world, to teach
All pride its level. Poet, prince and clown,
Each in your amorous arms has scaled the breach
Of his own pleasure and the world's renown.
Till with a yawn you turn, and from your bed
Kick out your hero with his ass's head.

XVI.

Gods, what a moral ! Yet in vain I jest.

The France which has been, and shall be again,
Is the most serious, and perhaps the best,

Of all the nations which have power with men.

France, only of the nations, has this plain
Thought in the world, to scorn hypocrisy ;

And by this token she shall purge the stain
Of her sins yet, though these as scarlet be.

Let her put off her folly ! 'Tis a cloak

Which hides her virtue. Let her foremost stand,
The champion of all necks which feel the yoke,

As once she stood sublime in every land.

Let her forego her Tonquins, and make good

Her boast to man of man's high brotherhood.—

XVII.

For lo ! the nations, the imperial nations
Of Europe, all imagine a vain thing,
Sitting thus blindly in their generations,
Serving an idol for their God and King.
Blindly they rage together, worshipping
Their lusts of cunning, and their lusts of gold ;
Trampling the hearts of all too weak to bring
Alms to their Baal which is bought and sold.
And lo ! there is no refuge, none but Baal
For man's best help, and the mute recreant earth
Drinks in its children's blood, and hears their wail,
And deals no vengeance on its last foul birth ;
And there is found no hand to ward or keep
The weak from wrong, and Pity is asleep.

XVIII.

Therefore do thou at least arise and warn,
Not folded in thy mantle, a blind seer,
But naked in thy anger, and new-born,
As in the hour when thy voice sounded clear
To the world's slaves, and tyrants quaked for fear.
Thou hadst a message then, a word of scorn,
First for thyself, thy own crimes' challenger,
And next for those who withered in thy dawn.
An hundred years have passed since that fair day,
And still the world cries loud, in its desire,
That right is wronged, and force alone has sway.
What profit are they, thy guns' tongues of fire ?
Nay, leave to England her sad creed of gold ;
Plead thou man's rights, clean-handed as of old.

XIX.

Alas, that words like these should be but folly !

Behold, the Boulevard mocks, and I mock too.

Let us away and purge our melancholy

With the last laughter at the Ambigu—

Here all is real. Here glory's self is true

Through each regime to its own mission holy,

Of plying still the world with something new

To cure its ache, or nobly souled or lowly.

One title Paris holds above the rest

Untouched by time or fortune's change or frown,

One temple of high fame, where she sits dressed

In youth eternal and mirth's myrtle crown,

And where she writes, each night, with deathless
hands,

“ To all the glories—of the stage—of France.”

XX.

Enough, dear Paris ! We have laughed together,
'Tis time that we should part, lest tears should
come.

I must fare on from winter and rough weather
And the dark tempests chained within Time's
womb.

Southwards I go. Each footstep marks the tomb
Of a dead pleasure. Melun, Fontainebleau,—

How shall I name them with the ghosts that roam
In their deserted streets of long ago ?

I will not stop to weep. Before me lie

Lands larger in their purpose, and with dreams
Peopled more purely ; and to these I fly

For ever from life's idler stratagems.

France ! thy white hand I kiss in suppliant guise,
Too sad to love thee, and alas ! too wise.

* * * * *

XXI.

To Switzerland, the land of lakes and snow,
And ancient freedom of ancestral type,
And modern innkeepers who cringe and bow,
And venal echoes, and Pans paid to pipe !
See, I am come. And here in vineyards, ripe
With sweet white grapes, I will sit down and read
Once more the loves of Rousseau, till I wipe
My eyes in tenderness for names long dead.
This is the birthplace of all sentiment,
The fount of modern tears. These hills in me
Stir what still lives of fancy reverent
For Mother Nature. Here Time's minstrelsy
Awoke, some century since, one sunny morn,
To find earth fortunate and man forlorn.

XXII.

Unblest discovery of an age too real !

They needed not the beauty of the earth,
Who held heaven's hope for their supreme ideal,
And found in worlds unseen a better birth.

What to the eye of faith were the hills worth,
The voiceless forests, the unpeopled coasts,
The wildernesses void of sentient mirth ?
In death men praise thee not, Thou Lord of
Hosts !

But when faith faltered, when the hope grew dim,
And heaven was hid with phantoms of despair,
And man stood trembling on destruction's brim,
Then turned he to the earth, and found her fair ;
His home, his refuge, which no doubt could rob,
A beauty throbbing to his own heart's throb.

XXIII.

Voltaire and Rousseau, these were thy twin priests,
Proud mother Nature, on thy opening day.
The first with bitter gibes perplexed the feasts
Of thy high rival, and prepared the way ;
The other built thy shrine. 'Twas here, men
say,
De Warens lived, whose pleasure was the text
Of the new gospel of the sons of clay,
The latest born of time, by faith unvexed.
Here for a century with reverent feet
Pilgrims, oppressed with barrenness of soul,
Toiled in their tears as to a Paraclete.
On these white hills they heard earth's thunders
roll
In sneers outpreaching the lost voice of God,
And shouted " Ichabod, ay, Ichabod ! "

XXIV.

And here too I, the latest fool of Time,
Sad child of doubt and passionate desires,
Touched with all pity, yet in league with crime,
Watched the red sunsets from the Alpine spires,
And lit my poet's lamp with kindred fires,
And dared to snatch my share of the sublime.

There was one with me, master of the choirs
Of eloquent thought, who listening to my rhyme,
And seeing in me a soul set on things

Not wholly base, although my need was sore,
Bade me take courage and essay new wings.

And thus it was I first beheld this shore,
Mourning the loss yet half consoled of gain,
The passionate pleader of youth's creed of pain.

XXV.

And what brave life it was we lived that tide,
Lived, or essayed to live—for who shall say
Youth garners aught but its own dreams denied,
Or handles what it hoped for yesterday?
High prophets were we of the uncultured lay,
Supremely scorning all that to our pride
Seemed less than truth. Be truth the thing it
may,
Our Goddess she, deformed but deified.
Prophets and poets of the earth's last birth
Revealed in ugliness, a blind despair,
Only that we were young and of such worth
As still can thrive upon life's leanest fare,
And find in the world's turmoil its full quittance
Of joy denied, however poor the pittance.

XXVI.

Youth is all valiant. He and I together,
Conscious of strength, and unproved of wrong,
Strained at the world's conventions as a tether
Too weak to bind us, and burst forth in song.
The backs of fools we scourged as with a thong,
And falsehood stripped to its last borrowed
feather,
And vowed to fact what things to fact belong,
And of the rest asked neither why nor whether.
Gravely we triumphed in that Gorgon time,
Unsexed for us at length thro' lack of faith,
Our barren mistress, from whose womb sublime
No beauty more should spring, but only death.
Like birds we sang by some volcanic brink,
Leaning on ugliness, and did not shrink.

XXVII.

The poets, everyone, have sung of passion—

But which has sung of friendship, man with man ?

Love seeks its price, but friendship has a fashion

Larger to give, and of less selfish plan.

The world grows old. From Beersheba to Dan

We find all barren, ruby lips grown ashen,

Hearts hard with years—and only Jonathan

Weeping with David o'er a ruined nation.

Then in the depth of days and our despair,

We count our treasures, if so be remain

Some loving letters, rings and locks of hair.

Nay, mourn not love. These only are not vain,

Your manlier wounds, when in the front you stood,

For a friend's sake and your sworn Brotherhood.

XXVIII.

Yet it is pitiful how friendships die,
 Spite of our oaths eternal and high vows.
Some fall through blight of tongues wagged secretly,
 Some through strifes loud in empty honour's
 house.
Some vanish with fame got too glorious,
And rapt to heaven in fiery chariots fly ;
 And some are drowned in sloth and the carouse
Of wedded joys and long love's tyranny.
O ye, who with high-hearted valliance
 Deem truth eternal and youth's dreams divine,
Keep ye from love and fame and the mischance
 Of other worship than the Muses nine.
So haply shall you tread life's latest strand
With a true brother still, and hand in hand.

XXIX.

How strangely now I come, a man of sorrow,
Nor yet such sorrow as youth dreamed of, blind—
But life's last indigence which dares not borrow
One garment more of Hope to cheat life's wind.
The mountains which we loved have grown un-
kind,
Nay, voiceless rather. Neither sound nor speech
Is heard among them, nor the thought enshrined
Of any deity man's tears may reach.
If I should speak, what echo would there come,
Of laughers lost, and dead unanswered prayers?
The shadow of each valley is a tomb
Filled with the dust of manifold despairs.
“Here we once lived.”—This motto on the door
Of silence stands, shut fast for evermore.

* * * * *

XXX.

'Tis time I stepped from Horeb to the plain—
Mountains, farewell. I need a heavier air.
Youth's memories are not good for souls in pain,
And each new age has its own meed of care.
Farewell, sad Alps, you are my barrier
Now to the North, and hold my passions slain
For all life's vultures, as I downward fare
To a new land of love which is not vain.
How staid is Italy ! No gardened rose
Scattering its leaves is chaster than she is,
No cloister stiller, no retreat more close.
There is a tameness even in her seas
On which white towns look down, as who should
say,
“Here wise men long have lived, and live to-day.”

XXXI.

Yes, Italy is wise, a cultured prude,
Stored with all maxims of a statelier age ;
These are her lessons for our northern blood,
With its dark Saxon madness and Norse rage.
With these she tempers us and renders sage,
As long ago she stayed the barbarous flood
Surging against her, and her heritage
Snatched from the feet of that brute multitude.
Calmly she waits us. What to her shall be
Our fevers of to-day, who e'erwhile knew
Cæsar's ambitions? What our pruriency,
Who saw Rome sacked by the lewd Vandal crew?
What our despair, who, while a world stood
mute,
Saw Henry kneel in tears at Peter's foot?

XXXII.

To-day I was at Milan, in such thought

As pilgrims bring who at faith's threshold stand,
Still burdened with the sorrows they have brought,
And vexed with stranger tongues in a strange
land.

And lo, this sign was given me. At my hand
Hung that mysterious supper Vinci wrought
With the sad twelve who were Christ's chosen
band,

A type of vows and courage come to nought.

And, while I gazed, with a reproachful look

The bread was broken and the wine was poured,
And the disciples raised their hands and spoke,

Each asking "Is it I? and I too? Lord!"

And there was answered them this mournful cry:

"All shall abandon me to night." So I.

XXXIII.

So I, I am ashamed of my old life,

Here in this saintly presence of days gone,
Ashamed of my weak heart's unmeaning strife,
Its loves, its lusts, its battles lost and won,
And its long search of pleasure 'neath the sun,
And its scant courage to endure the knife,
And its vain longing for good deeds undone,
Ending in bitter words with railing rife.

I am unworthy, yet am comforted,

As one who driving o'er long trackless roads
Of brake and rock and briar with footsore steed
And springless chariot, searching for vain gods,
Finds the high road before him, where at ease
The old world plods the rut of centuries.

XXXIV.

O fool ! O false ! I have abandoned heaven,
And sold my wealth for metal of base kind.
O, frail disciple of a fair creed given
For human hope when all the world was blind !
What was my profit ? Freedom of the mind,
A little pleasure of the years, some scars
Of lusty youth, and some few thoughts enshrined
In worthier record of my manhood's years.
All else is loss, and unredeemed distress ;
The voiceful seasons uninvited come,
And bring their tribute of new flowers, and pass :
Only the reason of the world is dumb ;
Nor does God any more by word or sign
Speak to our rebel hearts of things divine.

XXXV.

At last I kneel in Rome, the bourne, the goal

Of what a multitude of laden hearts !

No pilgrim of them all a wearier soul

Brought ever here, no master of dark arts.

A spirit vexed with more discordant parts,

No beggar a scrip barer of all dole ;

No son, alas, steps sorer with the darts

Of that rebellious sorrow, his sin's toll.

I kneel and make an offering of my care

And folly, and hurt reason. Who would not

In this fair city be the fool of prayer ?

Who would not kneel, if only for the lot

Of being born again—a soul forgiven,

Clothed in new childhood and the light of heaven ?

XXXVI.

The majesty of Rome to me is nought ;

The imperial story of her conquering car
Touches me only with compassionate thought

For the doomed nations faded by her star.

Her palaces of Cæsars tombstones are
For a whole world of freedoms vainly caught

In her high fortune. Throned was she in war ;
By war she perished. So is justice wrought.
A nobler Rome is here, which shall not die.

She rose from the dead ashes of men's lust,
And robed herself anew in chastity,

And half redeemed man's heritage of dust.
This Rome I fain would love, though darkly hid
In mists of passion and desires scarce dead.

XXXVII.

I will release my soul of argument.

He that would love must follow with shut eyes.

My reason of the years was discontent,

My treasure for all hope a vain surmise.

I will have done with wisdom's sophistries,

Her insolence of wit. What man shall say

He comfort takes in the short hour that dies,

Because he knew it mortal yesterday?

The tree of knowledge bears a bitter fruit —

This is that other tree, whose branches hold

Fair store of faith, peace, pity absolute,

And deeds of virtue for a world grown cold.

If by its fruits the tree of life be known,

Here is a truth undreamed of Solomon.

XXXVIII.

I saw one sitting on a kingly throne,
A man of age, whom time had touched with
white ;
White were his brows, and white his vestment
shone,
And white the childhood of his lips with light.
Only his eyes gleamed masterful and bright,
Holding the secrets shut of worlds unknown,
And in his hand the sceptre lay of might,
To bind and loose all souls beneath the sun.
Where is the manhood, where the Godhood here ?
The weak things of the world confound the wise.
Here is all weakness, let us cast out fear.
Here is all strength. Ah, screen me from those
eyes,
The terrible eyes of Him who sees unseen
The thing that is, and shall be, and has been.

XXXIX.

Ancient of days ! What word is thy command
To one befooled of wit and his own way ?
What counsel hast thou, and what chastening hand
For a lost soul grown old in its dismay ?
What penance shall he do, what ransom pay,
Of blood poured out for faith in a far land,
What mute knee-service, weeping here to-day,
In words of prayer no ear shall understand ?
Let him thy servant be, the least of all
In the Lord's Courts, but near thy mysteries,
To touch the crumbs which from thy table fall.
Let him——. But lo, thou speakest ; “ not with
these
Is God delighted. Get thee homeward hence,
They need thee more who wait deliverance ! ”

* * * * *

THE IDLER'S CALENDAR.

THE IDLER'S CALENDAR.

JANUARY.

COVER SHOOTING.

The week at Whinwood next to Christmas week.

Six guns, no more, but all good men and true,
Of the clean-visaged sort, with ruddy cheek

Which knows not care. Light-hearted Montagu

At the cover's end, as down the wind they flew,
Has stopped his score of pheasants, every beak,

Without more thought of Juliet than of you ;
And still I hear his loud-mouthed Purdeys speak.

Tybalt and Paris, with a bet on hand,

Have fired at the same woodcock. "Truce,"
say I,

"To civil jars,"—for look, as by command,

Bunch following bunch, a hundred pheasants fly.
Now battle, murder, death on every side !

Right, left, left, right, we pile up agony,
Till night stops all. Then home in chastened
 pride,
With aching heads, our slaughter satisfied.

FEBRUARY.

UNDER THE SPEAKER'S GALLERY.

In all the comedy of human things

What is more mirthful than for those, who sit
Far from the great world's vain imaginings,
To mingle in its war of words and wit,
A listener here, when Greek meets Greek, Fox
Pitt,

At question time in the Queen's Parliament?

'Tis the arena of old Rome. Here meet
More than mere Dacians on mere slaughter bent.
Yonder and close to Mr. Speaker's chair,
Enfolding all things in a net of words,
Stands our first gymnast. Let the rest beware.

The Tory Stafford, with voice sweet as bird's,
Shall answer him anon, or bolder borne

And if luck favours, from the nether herds
A voice of patriot wrath shall rise in scorn,
Or even young Cassius blow his windy horn.

MARCH.

A WEEK AT PARIS.

When loud March from the east begins to blow,
 And earth and heaven are black, then off we hie
By the night train to Paris, where we know
 Three windows set to the meridian sky,
 A third floor in the Rue de Rivoli.
There we will stop and see the fair world move
 For our sole pleasure past us, you and I,
And make pretence we are once more in love.
We need not fret at loss of pence or time,
 Though Father Bignon's smiles are paid in gold.
This life in idleness is more sublime
 Than all our toil and all our wealth twice told.
We need not fret. To-night for us shall Faure,
 Sara, Dupuis, or L'heritier unfold
New stores of mirth and music, and once more
We two shall sup, and at the Maison D'or.

APRIL.

TROUT-FISHING.

This morning, through my window, half awake,

I felt the south wind blow ; and presently,

With a tumultuous thrill and then a shake,

The nightingale broke forth in melody.

I rose in haste, and looked at the grey sky,

And read an omen. From its corner next

A book I drew, blest book, where fly on fly

Are all the letters of its well-thumbed text.

I chose my cast, a march-brown and a dun,

And ran down to the river, chasing hope.

At the first throw a mighty trout was on,

A very Samson, fit to burst a rope,

Yet tamed by one sad hank of yielding hair

And fate, the fisherman of king and pope.

Upon the grass he lies, and gasps the air,

Four silver pounds, sublimely fat and fair.

MAY.

THE LONDON SEASON.

I still love London in the month of May,
By an old habit, spite of dust and din.
I love the fair adulterous world, whose way
Is by the pleasant banks of Serpentine.
I love the worshippers at fashion's shrine,
The flowers, the incense, and the pageantry
Of generations which still ask a sign
Of that dear god, whose votary am I.
I love the "greetings in the market-place,"
The jargon of the clubs. I love to view
The "gilded youth" who at the window pass,
Forever smiling smiles for ever new.
I love these men and women at their task
Of hunting pleasure. Hope, mysterious too,
Touches my arm and points, and seems to ask
"And you, have you no Juliet in the masque?"

JUNE.

A DAY AT HAMPTON COURT.

It is our custom, once in every year,

Mine and two others', when the chestnut trees
Are white at Bushey, Ascot being near,

To drive to Hampton Court, and there, at ease
In that most fair of English palaces,
Spend a long summer's day. What better cheer
Than the old "Greyhound's," seek it where you
please?

And where a royal garden statelier?

The morning goes in tennis, a four set,

With George the marker. 'Tis a game for gods,
Full of return and volley at the net,

And laughter and mirth-making episodes
Not wholly classic. But the afternoon

Finds us punt-fishing idly with our rods,
Nodding and half in dreams, till all too soon
Darkness and dinner drive us back to town.

JULY.

GOODWOOD.

To the high breezes of the Goodwood Down
London has fled, and there awhile forgets
Its weariness of limb on lawns new-mown
And in green shadows all its wars and frets.
Thither we too will bring our calumets
In sign of peace restored o'er fashion slain,
Weaning our souls from folly with small bets
Of gloves and crowns with laughing ringwomen.
The sport is fair, luck fair, and Nature's face
Fairest of all. We neither make nor mar
A fortune here. Yet we were rich with less
Than this week's pleasure conquered from the
year.
I would not for a million not have seen
Fred Archer finish upon Guinevere.
Hark ! They are off again, a half mile spin,
Four of the dozen backed and bound to win.

AUGUST.

ON THE THAMES.

The river Thames has many a dear delight

In summer days for souls which know not guile,
Or souls too careless of the vain world's spite

To heed its frowning while the heavens smile.

In boyhood all our pleasure was in toil,
As with bent backs we laboured at the oar ;

We loved to spend our strength in the turmoil
Of speed disputed, conquered, conqueror.

But other years brought other joys. Alas !

Where is fair Rosamund, our heart's first queen,
Whose foot so lightly trod with us the grass,

Though burdened with the hundred loves of men,
At Kew, at Skindle's ? But no more of this.

We still have joys, and still old Thames is green.
Still on his back we float awhile and press
His hand in hope, and call it happiness.

SEPTEMBER.

FEAST OF ST. PARTRIDGE.

The only saint in all our calendar

Is good St. Partridge. 'Tis his feast to-day,

The happiest day of all a happy year,

And heralded as never yet was May.

The dawn has found us marshalled for the fray,

Striding the close-shorn stubbles ranked in line,

With lust of battle and with lust of play

Made glorious drunk as men are drunk with wine.

There go the coveys, forward birds and strong,

Bound for the mangold where they wheel and
stop.

Now, steady, men, and bring the left along.

A fortune waits us in each turnip-top.

With a wild shriek, and then a whirr of wings,

The covey rises. Brace and brace they drop,

Joining the dead ranks of forgotten things

In glorious death, the fierce delight of kings.

OCTOBER.

GAMBLING AT MONACO.

A jewelled kingdom set impregnable
In gardens green which front the violet sea,
A happy fortress shut and guarded well,
And cradled ever on the mountain's knee.
Here M. Blanc, sad prince of industry,
Has reared the palace which men call his hell ;
And here in autumn days, when winds blow free,
Pleasure shall lead us to sin's citadel.
Alas for vice ! Yet, who dares moralize
In the hushed rooms, where fortune reigns alway ?
Her solemn priest, with chink of coin, replies
“Messieurs, faites votre jeu. Le jeu est fait.”
Who dares be wise, lest wisdom's self be vexed ?
For all who come to preach remain to play.
Nay—leave poor vice, say I, her pleasant text,
Nor grudge her heaven in this world with the next.

NOVEMBER.

ACROSS COUNTRY.

November's here.—Once more the pink we don,
And on old Centaur, at the coverside,
Sit changing pleasant greetings one by one
With friend and neighbour. Half the county's
pride

Is here to-day. Squire, parson, peer, bestride
Their stoutest nags, impatient to be gone.

Here, schoolboys on their earliest ponies ride,
And village lads on asses, not out-done.
But hark ! That sounds like music. Ay, by God !

He's off across the fallow. “No, sirs, no ;
“Not yet a minute, just another rod !

“Then let him have it. Ho, there, tallyho !”
Now that's worth seeing ! Look ! He's topped
the wall,

Leaving his whole field pounded in a row.
A first flight place to-day was worth a fall—
So forward each, and heaven for us all !

DECEMBER.

AWAY TO EGYPT.

Enough, enough ! This winter is too rude,
Too dark of countenance, of tooth too keen.
Nature finds rebels now in flesh and blood,
And hearts grow sick for change and eyes for
green.

Let us away. What profits it that men
Are wise as gods, if winter holds its sway,
If blood be chilled, and numbness clasp the
brain ?

Frost is too stubborn. Let us then away !
Away to Egypt ! There we may forget
All but the presence of the blessed sun.
There in our tents well-housed, sublimely set
Under a pyramid, with horse and gun,
We may make terms with Nature and, awhile,
Put as it were our souls to grass, and run
Barefooted and barehearted in the smile
Of that long summer which still girds the Nile.

THE OLD SQUIRE.

I.

I like the hunting of the hare
Better than that of the fox ;
I like the joyous morning air,
And the crowing of the cocks.

II.

I like the calm of the early fields,
The ducks asleep by the lake,
The quiet hour which Nature yields,
Before mankind is awake.

III.

I like the pheasants and feeding things
Of the unsuspecting morn ;
I like the flap of the wood-pigeon's wings
As she rises from the corn.

IV.

I like the blackbird's shriek, and his rush
From the turnips as I pass by,
And the partridge hiding her head in a bush,
For her young ones cannot fly.

V.

I like these things, and I like to ride,
When all the world is in bed,
To the top of the hill where the sky grows wide,
And where the sun grows red.

VI.

The beagles at my horse heels trot,
In silence after me ;
There's Ruby, Roger, Diamond, Dot,
Old Slut and Margery,—

VII.

A score of names well used, and dear,
The names my childhood knew ;
The horn, with which I rouse their cheer,
Is the horn my father blew.

VIII.

I like the hunting of the hare
Better than that of the fox ;
The new world still is all less fair
Than the old world it mocks.

IX.

I covet not a wider range
Than these dear manors give ;
I take my pleasures without change,
And as I lived I live.

X.

I leave my neighbours to their thought ;
My choice it is, and pride,
On my own lands to find my sport,
In my own fields to ride.

XI.

The hare herself no better loves
The field where she was bred,
Than I the habit of these groves,
My own inherited.

XII.

I know my quarries every one,
The meuse where she sits low ;
The road she chose to-day was run
A hundred years ago.

XIII.

The lags, the gills, the forest ways,
The hedgerows one and all,
These are the kingdoms of my chase,
And bounded by my wall ;

XIV.

Nor has the world a better thing,
Though one should search it round,
Than thus to live one's own sole king,
Upon one's own sole ground.

XV.

I like the hunting of the hare ;
It brings me, day by day,
The memory of old days as fair,
With dead men past away.

XVI.

To these, as homeward still I ply
And pass the churchyard gate,
Where all are laid as I must lie,
I stop and raise my hat.

XVII.

I like the hunting of the hare ;
New sports I hold in scorn.
I like to be as my fathers were,
In the days e'er I was born.

SANCHO SANCHEZ.

I.

Sancho Sanchez lay a-dying in the house of
Mariquita,

For his life ebbed with the ebbing of the red
wound in his side.

And he lay there as they left him when he came
from the Corrida

In his gold embroidered jacket and his red cloak
and his pride.

II.

But at cockcrow in the morning, when the con-
vents of Sevilla

Suddenly rang aloud to matins, Sanchez wakened
with a cry,

And he called to Mariquita, bade her summon his
cuadrilla,

That they all might stand around him in the
hour when he should die.

III.

For he thought in his bold bosom, "I have ventured with them often,

And have led the way to honour upon every ring in Spain.

And now in this the hardest of the fields that I have fought in

I would choose that every face of them were witness of my pain.

IV.

"For their stern eyes would upbraid me if I went down to the battle

Without a friend to cheer me, or at least a fool to hiss.

And they hold it all unworthy men should die like fatted cattle

Stricken singly in the darkness at the shambles of Cadiz."

V.

Then he bade the lamps be lighted, and he made
them bring a mirror,
Lest his cheeks should have grown paler in the
watches of the night.
For he feared lest his disciples should mistrust
his soul of terror,
When they came to look upon him, if they saw
his face was white.

VI.

Oh, long time in the mirror did he look with
awful smiling
At the eyes which gazed out at him, while the
women watched him mute.
And he marked how death's white fingers had
been clammily defiling
The redness of God's image and had wiped the
sunburns out.

VII.

Then he spake, "Go fetch the carmine from the
side drawer of the table,
Where Mariquita keeps it." But, when it was
not found,
"'Tis no matter," answered Sanchez, "we must
do what we are able."
And he painted his cheeks' paleness with the
red blood of his wound.

VIII.

And anon there came a murmur as of voices and
a humming
On the staircase, and he knew them by their
footsteps at the door.
And he leant up on his pillow that his eyes might
see them coming
In their order of the plaza as they strode
across the floor.

IX.

And when they stood around him, in their stately
mantas folded,
With a solemn grief outawing the brute laughter
of their eyes,
You had deemed them in the lamplight to be
bronzen statues moulded
Of the powers of Nature yielding a brave man
in sacrifice.

X.

But the soul of Sanchez quailed not, and he
laughed in their sad faces,
Crying loud to Mariquita for the Valdepeñas
wine.
“A fair pig-skin, Caballeros, blushes here for your
embraces.
And I drink to you your fortune, and I pray
you drink to mine.”

XI.

Then they filled their leathern flagons, and they
held them up together

In a ghastly expectation till their chief should
give the sign.

And the red wine in the silence flowed like blood
adown the leather.

And the red blood from the pillow trickled
drop by drop like wine.

XII.

Spake the Master, "E'er I pledge you, look upon
me, men, and hearken,

For I have a thing to utter, and a dying man
is wise.

Death is weighing down my eyelids. Silently
your faces darken.

But another torch is lighted than the daylight
in my eyes.

XIII.

“Life, I see it now as never I had thought to
comprehend it,
Like the lines which old Manola used to write
upon the sand,
And we looked on in wonder nor guessed till it
was ended
The birds and trees and faces which were grow-
ing from her hand.

XIV.

“Meaning was there from the outset, glorious
meaning in our calling,
In the voice of emulation and our boyhood’s
pride of soul,
From the day when first the capa from our
father’s shoulders falling
We were seized with inspiration and rushed out
upon the bull.

XV.

“Meaning was there in our courage and the calm
of our demeanour,
For there stood a foe before us which had need
of all our skill.
And our lives were as the programme, and the
world was our arena,
And the wicked beast was death, and the horns
of death were hell.

XVI.

“And the boast of our profession was a bulwark
against danger
With its fearless expectation of what good or ill
may come,
For the very prince of darkness shall burst forth
on us no stranger
When the doors of death fly open to the rolling
of the drum.

XVII.

“ As I lay here in the darkness, I beheld a sign
from heaven,
Standing close a golden angel by the footpost
of my bed,
And in his hand a letter with the seal and arms
engraven
Of the glorious San Fernando which he bade
me read and read.

XVIII.

“ And the message of his master, the blessed king
my patron,
Was to bid me in his honour to hold myself at
need
For this very day and morning of his feast and
celebration,
And in pledge of his high favour he had sent
me his own steed.

XIX.

“For the lists of heaven were open, and that day
they had decreed it

There should be a special function for the glory
of his name.

And the beasts were Sevillanos, and a master’s
hand was needed

Lest the swords of heaven should falter and
the Saint be put to shame.

XX.

“And I heard the potro stamping in the street,
and would have risen

But that Mariquita held me and the women and
my wound.

And, though the angel left me, it was truth and
not a vision,

And I know the Saint has called me, and the
place where I am bound.

XXI.

“ I shall fight this day in heaven, and, though all
 hell shall assail me,
I have hope of a good issue, for perhaps I have
 some skill,
And perhaps, if I should stumble or if my hand
 should fail me,
There are others in the plaza who have vowed
 me less than ill.

XXII.

“ And my mantle of salvation is the faith which is
 our charter,
And the Virgin of the Pillar my protector and
 reward,
And the hosts of heaven my witness and each
 Spanish Saint and Martyr,
And our Lord Don Santiago himself has lent
 the sword.”

XXIII.

Thus he spoke, and on his speaking fell a silence
and a wonder,
While the eyes of his companions turned in awe
from each to each,
And they waited in expectance for the gates to
roll asunder,
And the voices of the angels to command him
to the breach,—

XXIV.

Waited till the sun uprising sent his glory through
the chamber
And the spent lamps paled and flickered on the
shame of their dismay,
And the dying man transfigured passed in silence
from his slumber,
Like a king to coronation, in the light of his
new day.

XXV.

Only they that stood the closest say the pale lips
curved and parted,

And the eyes flashed out in battle, and the
fingers sought the sword.

“ ’Tis the President has called him,” said Fernan-
dez the true hearted,

“ He has thrown his hat behind him for the
glory of the Lord ! ”

ACROSS THE PAMPAS.

I.

Dost thou remember, oh, dost thou remember,
Here as we sit at home and take our rest,
How we went out one morning on a venture
In the West?

II.

Hast thou forgotten in these English hedgerows,
How the great Pampas rolled out like the sea?
Never a daisy in that mighty meadow!
Never a tree!

III.

Full were our hearts upon that sunny morning;
Stout-handed and stout-hearted went we forth.
The warm wind in our faces breathed us fortune
From the North;

IV.

And high in heaven the sun stood for a token.

We had no other sign by which to steer.

No landmark is there in the earth's great ocean,

For mariner.

V.

Dost thou remember how, when night was falling,

There in the middle plain, as best we might,

We set our little tent up as a fortress

For the night ?

VI.

Dost thou remember how, through the night
watches,

We listened to the voices of the plain,

The owls and plovers and the bold bishachas,

Talking like men ?

VII.

Drowsy we sat, and watched our horses feeding,
Dim through the night, while over the tent's
mouth
The Cross was turning like a clock and reeling
In the South.

VIII.

But, as the night grew out and we grew chilly,
Under our blankets safe we crept and warm,
Full of good heart and each with loaded pistols
Close to his arm ;

IX.

And so dreamed pleasant dreams of far off faces,
And trees and fields which we had loved in youth,
All in a maze of present apprehension
Mingled uncouth ;

X.

And how we travelled on and ever onwards,
Still in the red path of the setting sun,
Until into the heart of a great woodland
We had come ;

XI.

And there saw, round about our strange encamp-
ment,
Flocks of bright birds which flew and screamed
at us,
Red cardinals and woodpeckers and parrots
Multitudinous ;

XII.

And on the lake black-headed swans were sailing,
And in the morning to the water's brink
Flamingoes, like the rising sun, came wading
Down to drink.

XIII.

Dost thou remember, oh dost thou remember
How, in that fatal wood, the mancaròn
Found out a poisonous herb before his fellows,
And fed thereon ;

XIV.

And how we left him, and how Cæsar sickened,
And how the sky grew dark and overcast,
And how two tragic days we rode on silent
In the blast ;

XV.

And how the wind grew icy and more icy,
Until we could not feel our hands or feet,
As sick at heart we sought in vain a hiding
From the sleet ;

XVI.

Lighting at last on a deserted post house,
Where we found shelter from the wind, but
nought
Of entertainment for our souls or comfort
Of any sort ;

XVII.

And how in that wild pass brave Cæsar dying
Stretched out his hand towards the promised
land,
And saw as in a dream the white hills lying
Close at hand,—

XVIII.

For, e'er the sun set, suddenly that evening,
The great plain opened out beneath our feet,
And, in a valley far below, lay gleaming,
With square and street,

XIX.

And spire and dome and pinnacle, uprising
White on the bosom of a mountain slope,
To our amazement bodily the city
Of our hope.

XX.

Dost thou remember, oh, dost thou remember
How the bells rang as, sick and travelworn,
A weary crew, we made our solemn entry
To the town?

XXI.

Strangely, as phantoms out of the great desert,
We came into the city, and at last
Heard sound of Christian singing in the churches
As we passed :

XXII.

And laid at length our our weary limbs in rapture
Between the clean sheets of a Christian bed.
Oh ! there are things I think we shall remember
When we are dead.

FROM THE ARABIC.

FROM THE ARABIC.

I.

THE CAMEL-RIDER.

I.

There is no thing in all the world but love,
No jubilant thing of sun or shade worth one sad
tear.

Why dost thou ask my lips to fashion songs
Other than this, my song of love to thee?

II.

See where I lie and pluck the thorns of grief,
Dust on my head and fire, as one who mourns his
slain.

Are they not slain, my treasures of dear peace?
This their red burial is, sand heaped on sand.

III.

Here came I in the morning of my joys.

Before the dawn was born, through the dark downs

I rode.

The low stars led me on as with a voice,

Stars of the scorpion's tail in the deep south.

IV.

Sighing I came, and scattering wide the sand.

No need had I to urge her speed with hand or heel,

The creature I bestrode. She knew my haste,

And knew the road I sought, the road to thee.

V.

Jangling her bells aloud in wantonness,

And sighing soft, she too, her sighs to my soul's
sighs ;

Behind us the wind followed thick with scents

Of incense blossoms and the dews of night.

VI.

The thorn trees caught at us with their crook'd
hands ;

The hills in blackness hemmed us in and hid the
road ;

The spectres of the desert howled and warned ;
I heeded nothing of their words of woe.

VII.

Thus till the dawn I sped in my desire,
Breasting the ridges, slope on slope, till morning
broke ;

And lo ! the sun revealed to me no sign,
And lo ! the day was widowed of my hope.

VIII.

Where are the tents of pleasure and dear love,
Set in the Vale of Thyme, where winds in Spring
are fain ?

The highways of the valley, where they stood
Strong in their flocks, are there. But where are they ?

IX.

The plain was dumb, as emptied of all voice ;
No bleat of herds, no camels roaring far below
Told of their presence in the pastures void,
Of the waste places which had been their homes.

X.

I climbed down from my watch-tower of the rocks,
To where the tamarisks grow, and the dwarf palms,
alarmed.
I called them with my voice, as the deer calls,
Whose young the wolves have hunted from their
place.

XI.

I sought them in the foldings of the hill,
In the deep hollows shut with rocks, where no
winds blow :
I sought their footstep under the tall cliffs,
Shut from the storms, where the first lambs are
born.

XII.

The tamarisk boughs had blossomed in the night,
And the white broom which bees had found, the
wild bees' brood.

But no dear signal told me of their life,
No spray was torn in all that world of flowers.

XIII.

Where are the tents of pleasure and dear love,
For which my soul took ease for its delight in
Spring,
The black tents of her people beautiful
Beyond the beauty of the sons of kings?

XIV.

The wind of war has swept them from their place,
Scattering them wide as quails, whom the hawk's
hate pursues ;
The terror of the sword importunate
Was at their backs, nor spared them as they flew.

XV.

The summer wind has passed upon their fields ;
The rain has purged their hearth-stones, and made
smooth their floors ;
Low in the valley lie their broken spears,
And the white bones which are their tale forlorn.

XVI.

Where are the sons of Saba in the South,
The men of mirth and pride to whom my songs
were sung,
The kinsmen of her soul who is my soul,
The brethren of her beauty whom I love ?

XVII.

She mounted her tall camel in the waste,
Loading it high for flight with her most precious
things ;
She went forth weeping in the wilderness,
Alone with fear on that far night of ill.

XVIII.

She fled mistrusting, as the wild roe flees,
Turning her eyes behind her, while fear fled before ;
No other refuge knew she than her speed,
And the black land that lies where night is born.

XIX.

Under what canopy of sulphurous heaven,
Dark with the thunderclouds unloosing their mad
tongues,
Didst thou lie down aweary of thy burden,
In that dread place of silence thou hadst won?

XX.

Close to what shelter of what naked rocks,
Carved with what names of terror of what kings
of old,
Near to what monstrous shapes unmerciful,
Watching thy death, didst thou give up thy soul?

XXI.

Or dost thou live by some forgotten well,
Waiting thy day of ransom to return and smile,
As the birds come when Spring is in the heaven,
And dost thou watch me near while I am blind?

XXII.

Blind in my tears, because I only weep,
Kindling my soul to fire because I mourn my slain,
My kindred slain, and thee, and my dear peace,
Making their burial thus, sand heaped on sand.

XXIII.

For see, there nothing is in all the world
But only love worth any strife or song or tear.
Ask me not then to sing or fashion songs
Other than this, my song of love to thee.

FROM THE ARABIC.

II.

THE DESOLATE CITY.

I.

Dark to me is the earth. Dark to me are the
heavens.

Where is she that I loved, the woman with eyes
like stars ?

Desolate are the streets. Desolate is the city,
A city taken by storm, where none are left but
the slain !

II.

Sadly I rose at dawn, undid the latch of my shutters,

Thinking to let in light, but I only let in love.

Birds in the boughs were awake ; I listened to their
chaunting ;

Each one sang to his love ; only I was alone.

III.

This, I said in my heart, is the hour of life and of
pleasure,

Now each creature on earth has his joy, and lives
in the sun,

Each in another's eyes finds light, the light of
compassion,

This is the moment of pity, this is the moment of
love.

IV.

Speak, O desolate city ! Speak, O silence in sadness !

Where is she that I loved in my strength, that
spoke to my soul ?

Where are those passionate eyes that appealed to
my eyes in passion ?

Where is the mouth that kissed me, the breast
I laid to my own ?

V.

Speak, thou soul of my soul, for rage in my heart
is kindled.

Tell me, where didst thou flee on the day of
destruction and fear?

See, my arms still enfold thee, enfolding thus all
heaven,

See, my desire is fulfilled in thee, for it fills the
earth.

VI.

Thus in my grief I lamented. Then turned I from
the window,

Turned to the stair, and the open door, and the
empty street,

Crying aloud in my grief, for there was none to
chide me,

None to mock at my weakness, none to behold
my tears.

VII.

Groping I went, as blind. I sought her house, my
beloved's.

There I stopped at the silent door, and listened
and tried the latch.

Love, I cried, dost thou slumber? This is no hour
for slumber,

This is the hour of love, and love I bring in my
hand.

VIII.

I knew the house, with its windows barred, and
its leafless fig-tree,

Climbing round by the doorstep the only one in
the street ;

I knew where my hope had climbed to its goal and
there encircled

All that those desolate walls once held, my
beloved's heart.

IX.

There in my grief she consoled me. She loved me
when I loved not.

She put her hand in my hand, and set her lips to
my lips.

She told me all her pain and showed me all her
trouble.

I, like a fool, scarce heard, hardly returned her
kiss.

X.

Love, thy eyes were like torches. They changed
as I beheld them.

Love, thy lips were like gems, the seal thou
settest on my life.

Love, if I loved not then, behold this hour thy
vengeance ;

This is the fruit of thy love and thee, the unwise
grown wise.

XI.

Weeping strangled my voice. I called out, but
none answered ;
Blindly the windows gazed back at me, dumbly
the door ;
She whom I love, who loved me, looked not on
my yearning,
Gave me no more her hands to kiss, showed me
no more her soul.

XII.

Therefore the earth is dark to me, the sunlight
blackness,
Therefore I go in tears and alone, by night and
day ;
Therefore I find no love in heaven, no light, no
beauty,
A heaven taken by storm, where none are left
but the slain !

FROM THE ARABIC.

III.

THE GRIEF OF LOVE.

I.

Love, I am sick for thee, sick with an absolute grief,
Sick with the thought of thy eyes and lips and
bosom.

All the beauty I saw, I see to my hurt revealed.
All that I felt I feel to-day for my pain and sorrow.

II.

Love, I would fain forget thee, hide thee in deeper
night,
Shut thee where no thought is, in the grave with
tears.

Love, I would turn my face to the wall and, if
needs be, die ;
Death less cruel were than thy eyes which have
blinded me.

III.

Since thou art gone from me, glory is gone from
my life ;

Dumb are the woods and streams, and dumb the
voice of my soul ;

Dead are the flowers we loved, blackened and sere
with blight,

Earth is frost-bound under my foot where our
footsteps trod.

IV.

Give me back for my sorrow the days of senseless
peace,

Days when I thought not of thee, or thought
in wisdom ;

Let me see thee once more as thou to my folly
wert,

A woman senseless as scunding brass or as
tinkling cymbal.

V.

Why didst thou show me thy heart, which I thought
not of?

Why didst thou bare me thy soul, who to me
wert soulless?

Why didst thou kiss my mouth, when my mouth
did mock?

Why didst thou speak to my lips of love, e'er my
lips had spoken?

VI.

Love, thou hast made me thine, thine, and in my
despite,

Laying thy hand on my heart in the soft Spring
weather;

Love, thou hast bought my soul at a price, the price
of thine,

Never again to mock at love, ah, nèver, never!

FROM THE ARABIC.

IV.

A LOVE SECRET.

I.

Love has its secrets, joy has its revealings :

How shall I speak of that which love has hid ?

If my beloved shall return to greet me,

Deeds shall be done for her none ever did.

II.

My beloved loved me. How shall I reveal it ?

We were alone that morning in the street.

She looked down at the ground, and blushed, and
trembled.

She stopped me with her eyes when these did
meet.

III.

“What wouldst thou, sweet one? What wouldst
thou with sorrow,
Thou, the new morning star with me, the night?
What are those flowers thou holdest to thy bosom?
What are the thoughts thou hidest from my
sight?”

IV.

“Thine are these flowers,” she said, “these
foolish roses,
And thine the thoughts, if thus it be thy will.
I hold them close for fear that thou shouldst mock
me,
I hold them to my heart for fear of ill.”

V.

“Nay, what of ill? ’Tis only age is evil,
Only forgetfulness and grief and pain;
What dost thou know of grief, that thou shouldst
fear it?
Mine is the grief who cannot love again.”

VI.

She raised her eyes, she looked at me in
wonder,

“The ache is here,” she said, “by night and
day ;

I cannot teach my heart to bear its burden,
I cannot turn my silence from its way.”

VII.

“Speak to me, child. I am thy wise physician ;
A man acquainted with all grief can teach ;
There is no sorrow but has joy for sister,
No silence but finds counterpart in speech.”

VIII.

My beloved laughed. She saw through my dis-
sembling ;

She held to me her hand, that I might kiss,
The inside of her hand. ’Twas like a petal
Of her own roses, but more dear than this.

IX.

I felt its pulses, like a bird in prison ;

“Sweet child,” I said, “what wouldst thou I
should prove ?

I cannot make thee wiser than thy wisdom,

Who knowest all things since thou knowest
love.”

X.

How shall I tell it ? How shall I reveal it ?

I led her by the hand, as thus I said,

Back from the street to where it stood, my dwelling,

And closed the door on where it stood, my bed.

XI.

Her laughter stopped. “Nay, use not thou un-
kindly,

Thine is the hand to deal or spare the blame ;

I dare not be to thee thus uninvited,

Thou dost not know me, hast not learned my
name.”

XII.

How shall I tell it? How shall I reveal it?

Love in that instant found its latest birth,

“Soul of my soul,” I cried, “thy name is Pleasure,
The sweetest thing to love on this sad earth.”

XIII.

I held her in my arms, I pressed her fastly,

“Ah, if thou lovedst me indeed,” she cried.

“I love thee, and I love thee,” was my answer,

“My sister, my beloved one, my bride !”

XIV.

Love has its secrets. Joy has its revealings.

I speak of this which love in vain has hid ;

If my beloved shall return to greet me,

Deeds shall be done for her none ever did.

PASTORAL POEMS.

WORTH FOREST.

A PASTORAL.

Come, Prudence, you have done enough to-day—
The worst is over, and some hours of play
We both have earned, even more than rest, from
 toil ;

Our minds need laughter, as a spent lamp oil,
And after their long fast a recompense.
How sweet the evening is with its fresh scents
Of briar and fern distilled by the warm wind !
How green a robe the rain has left behind !
How the birds laugh !—What say you to a walk
Over the hill, and our long promised talk
About the rights and wrongs of infancy ?
Our patients are asleep, dear angels, she
Holding the boy in her ecstatic arms,
As mothers do, and free from past alarms,

The child grown calm. If we, an hour or two,
Venture to leave them, 'tis but our hope's due.
My tongue is all agog to try its speed
To a new listener, like a long-stalled steed
Loosed in a meadow, and the Forest lies
At hand, the theme of its best flatteries.
See, Prudence, here, your hat, where it was thrown
The night you found me in the house alone
With my worst fear and these two helpless things.
Please God, that worst has folded its black wings,
And we may let our thoughts on pleasure run
Some moments in the light of this good sun.
They sleep in heaven's guard. Our watch to-
night
Will be the braver for a transient sight—
The only one perhaps more fair than they—
Of Nature dressed for her June holiday.

* * * * *

This is the watershed between the Thames
And the South coast. On either hand the streams
Run to the great Thames valley and the sea,

The Downs, which should oppose them, servilely
Giving them passage. Who would think these

Downs,

Which look like mountains when the sea-mist
crowns

Their tops in autumn, were so poor a chain?

Yet they divide no pathways for the rain,

Nor store up waters, in this pluvius age,

More than the pasteboard barriers of a stage.

The crest lies here. From us the Medway flows

To drain the Weald of Kent, and hence the Ouse

Starts for the Channel at Newhaven. Both

These streams run eastward, bearing North and
South.

But, to the West, the Adur and the Arun

Rising together, like twin rills of Sharon,

Go forth diversely, this through Shoreham gap,

And that by Arundel to ocean's lap.

All are our rivers, by our Forest bred,

And one besides which with more reverend heed

We need to speak, for her desert is great

Beyond the actual wealth of her estate,—
For Spenser sang of her, the River Mole,
And Milton knew her name, though he, poor soul,
Had never seen her, as I think being blind,
And so miscalled her sullen. Others find
Her special merit to consist in this :
A maiden coyness, and her shy device
Of mole-like burrowing,—and in truth her way
Is hollowed out and hidden from the day,
Under deep banks and the dark overgrowth
Of knotted alder roots and stumps uncouth,
From source to mouth, and once at Mickleham,
She fairly digs her grave, in deed and name,
And disappears.—There is an early trace
Of this propensity to devious ways
Shown by the little tributary brook
Which bounds our fields, for lately it forsook
Its natural course, to burrow out a road
Under an ash tree in its neighbourhood.
But whether this a special virtue is,
Or like some virtues but a special vice,

We need not argue. This at least is true,
 That in the Mole are trout, and many too,
 As I have often proved with rod and line
 From boyhood up, blest days of pins and twine !
 How many an afternoon have our hushed feet
 Crept through the alders where the waters meet,
 Mary's and mine, and our eyes viewed the pools
 Where the trout lay, poor unsuspecting fools,
 And our hands framed their doom,—while over-
 head

His orchestra of birds the blackbird led.
 In those lost days, no angler of them all
 Could boast our cunning with the bait let fall,
 Close to their snouts, from some deceiving coigne,
 Or mark more notches when we stopped to join
 Our fishes head to tail and lay them out
 Upon the grass, and count our yards of trout.
 'Twas best in June, with the brook growing clear
 After a shower as now. In dark weather
 It was less certain angling, for the stream
 Was truly "sullen" then, so deep and dim.

'Tis thus in mountain lakes, as some relate,
Where the fish need the sun to see the bait.
The fly takes nothing in these tangled brooks,
But grief to fishermen and loss of hooks ;
And all our angling was of godless sort,
With living worm,—and yet we loved the sport.

But wait. This path will lead us to the gill,
Where you shall see the Mole in her first rill,
E'er yet she leaves the Forest, and her bed
Is still of iron stone, which stains her red,
Yet keeps her pure and lends a pleasant taste
To her young waters as they bubble past.
You hear her lapping round the barren flanks
Of these old heaps we call the "Cinder-banks,"
Where our forefathers forged their iron ore,
When Paul's was building. Now, the rabbits
bore
In the still nights, beneath these ancient heaps,
A very honeycomb. See, where she peeps,
The infant river. You could hardly wet

Your ankles in her midmost eddy yet.
 She has a pretty cunning in her look
 Mixed with alarm, as in her secret nook
 We find her out, half fugitive, half brave,
 A look that all the Forest creatures have.
 Let us away. Perhaps her guilelessness
 Is troubled at a guilty human face,
 (Mine, Prudence,—not your own).

I know a dell

Knee deep in fern, hard by, the very cell
 For an elf hermit. Here stag-mosses grow,
 Thick as a coverlet, and fox-gloves blow
 Purple and white, and the wild columbine,
 And here in May there springs that thing divine,
 The lily of the valley, only here
 Found in the Forest, blossoming year on year ;
 A place o'ershadowed by a low-crowned oak.
 The enchanted princess never had been woke
 If she had gone to sleep in such a spot,
 In spite of fortune. Why, a corpse forgot

Might lie, with eyes appealing to the sky,
Unburied here for half a century.
And this the woodcocks, as I take it, knew,
Who stayed to breed here all the summer through,
When other birds were gone. I flushed a pair
On the longest day last year—the nest was there—
And found some egg-shells chipped among the
moss ;
The sight is rarer now than once it was.

* * * * *

There : we have gathered breath and climbed the
hill,
And now can view the landscape more at will.
This is the Pilgrim road, a well-known track,
When folk did all their travelling on horseback,
Now long deserted, yet a right of way,
And marked on all our maps with due display.
Beneath this yew tree, which perhaps has seen
Our fathers riding to St. Thomas' shrine,
(For this was once the way of pilgrimage
From the south-west for all who would engage

Their vows at Canterbury), we will sit,
 As doubtless they too sat, and rest a bit.
 I love this solitude of birch and fern,
 These quags and mosses, and I love the stern
 Black yew trees and the hoary pastures bare,
 Or tufted with long growths of withered hair
 And rank marsh grass. I love the bell-heath's
 bloom,
 And the wild wealth which passionate earth's
 womb
 Throws in the Forest's lap to clothe unseen
 Its ancient barrenness with youth and green.
 I love the Forest ; 'tis but this one strip
 Along the watershed that still dares keep
 Its title to such name. Yet once wide grown
 A mighty woodland stretched from Down to Down,
 The last stronghold and desperate standing-place
 Of that indigenous Britannie race
 Which fell before the English. It was called
 By Rome "Anderida," in Saxon "Weald."
 Time and decay, and man's relentless mood,

Have long made havock of the lower wood
With axe and plough ;—and now, of all the plain,
These breadths of higher ground alone remain,
In token of its presence. Who shall tell
How long, in these lost wilds of brake and fell,
Or in the tangled groves of oak below,
Gathering his sacred leaf, the mistletoe,
Some Druid priest, forgotten and in need,
May here have kept his rite and owned his creed
After the rest ? For hardly yet less rude,
Have later dwelt that patron of our wood,
The Christian Hermit Leonard, he who slew
The last authentic dragon England knew ;
A man of prayer and penitential vows,
Whose tale survives in many a forest house.
For, having slain his monster, he was given
To choose whate'er he would in gift from heaven,
And took for his sole recompense this thing :
“ Snakes should not bite, nor nightingales should
sing
Within the Forest precincts.” Thus, thought he,

His orisons should unmolested be
By mundane joys and troubles.

* * * * *

Yonder ridge

Cutting the sky-line at the horizon's edge,
Is the Surrey Hills. Beneath the chalk pit, set
Like a white cloud upon the face of it,
Lies Dorking, famed for fowls,—and, further still,
Wotton and Shere ; in front you have Leith Hill,
Which looks upon St. Paul's and on the sea,
A point of note in our geography.
All this is Evelyn's land, who long ago
Left us his record of the vale below
And wrote the "Silva,"—now to hands as good
Passed, the descendant's of his name and blood,
That doughty squire's, who lately stood in fight
With the new dragons of the Primrose rite,
And broke a lance for Ireland and the cause
Of freedom, flouted by coercion laws.
Strange change ! For long in history these same
hills

Were held as ominous of lowland ills,
A source of robber fear, in foul repute,
And natural fortress since the days of Knute,
And earlier still when Saxon Sussex stood
A home-ruled kingdom of primæval wood.
A camp, an eagle's nest, a foot set down
Into the Weald, and evil of renown
With the free dwellers of the plain, who saw
A menace brooding of imperial law.
Saxon or Dane or Norman, each in turn,
Set there his camp to pillage and to burn ;
For history, just as now, was mainly then
A tale of wars 'twixt regiments and men.
We, forest dwellers, show with honest boast
Our Slaughter Bridge, where the Norse horde
was lost,
Drowned in the red Mole waters, when the Dane
Fled from his eerie, nor returned again.

The farthest point of all, and looking west,
Is the line of Hindhead, on whose triple crest,

With a good glass, a three inch telescope,
 You might make out the cross upon the top :
 It used to be a gibbet. As a child
 What tales I treasured of that headland wild,
 With its three murderers, who in chains there
 hung,
 Rocked by the winds and tempest-tossed and
 swung !
 Three Portsmouth sailors were they who their
 mate
 Murdered for gold, and grog which guineas get,
 And in the "Punch Bowl" made their brute
 carouse,
 Leaving him dead, in a lone public house,
 Where retribution seized them as was due,—
 For in that age of simple faiths and true,
 Murder did always out,—and so apace
 Brought them to justice in that self-same place ;
 And many years they hung. At last its sway
 Humanity, that child of yesterday,
 Asserted in their case, and craved their bones

For Christian sepulture and these trim stones.
I half regret the leniency thus lent :
Their gallows tree was their best monument ;
But ours is a trim age.

There, farther down,
Is a tower, or "folly," built of late by one
We call in these parts "Chevalier de Malt,"
(The brewers love high places, and no fault).
Behind us the chief ridge—and, as I speak,
Out of its bowels, with an angry shriek,
And rushing down the valley at our feet,
The train has found us out in our retreat.
It came from Balcombe tunnel and is bound
To be in London e'er an hour is round.
It scarcely scares our solitude away ;
And yonder Royston crows, the black and grey,
Sit on unmoved upon their oak. This ridge
Is only thirty miles from London Bridge,
And, when the wind blows north, the London
smoke

Comes down upon us, and the grey crows croak,
For the great city seems to reach about
With its dark arms, and grip them by the throat.
Time yet may prove them right. The wilderness
May be disforested, and Nature's face
Stamped out of beauty by the heel of Man,
Who has no room for beauty in his plan.

Such things may be, for things as strange have
been.

This very place, where peace and sylvan green
And immemorial silence and the mood
Of solemn Nature, virgin and unwooded,
Seem as a heritage,—this very place
Was once the workshop of a busy race
Which dug and toiled and sweated. Here once
stood,

Amid the blackened limbs of tortured wood,
And belching smoke and fury from its mouth,
A monstrous furnace, to whose jaws uncouth
A race as monstrous offered night and day

The Forest's fairest offspring for a prey.
Here stood a hamlet, black and populous,
With human sins and sorrows in each house,
A mining centre. Which of us could guess
Each yew tree yonder marks a dwelling-place
Of living men and women?—nay, a tomb?
Of all the secrets hidden in Earth's womb,
None surely is more pitiful and strange
Than this of human death and human change
Amid the eternal greenness of the Spring.
All we may guess of what the years shall bring,
Is this: that about April every year,
White blossoms shall burst forth upon the pear
And pink upon the apple. Nothing else.
Earth has a silent mockery which repels
Our questioning. Her history is not ours,
And overlays it with a growth of flowers.

Ah, Prudence, you who wonder, being town bred,
What troubles grieve us in the lives we lead,
What cause we have for sorrow in these fields

Whose beauty girds us with its thousand shields,—
 This is our tragedy. You cannot know,
 In your bald cities, where no cowslips blow,
 How dear life is to us. The tramp of feet
 Brushes all older footsteps from the street,
 And you see nothing of the graves you tread.
 With us they are still present, the poor dead,
 And plead with us each day of life, and cry
 “Did I not love my life, I too, even I?”
 You wonder!—Wonder rather we are not
 All touched with madness and disease of thought,
 Being so near the places where they sleep
 Who sowed these fields we in their absence reap.
 It were more logical. And here in truth
 No few of our Weald peasants in their youth
 Lose their weak wits, or in their age go mad,
 Brooding on sights the world had deemed most
 glad.

I have seen many such. The Hammer Ponds,
 So frequent in the Forest's outer bounds,
 Have all their histories of despairing souls

Brought to their depths to find their true life's
goals.

You see one in the hollow, where the light
Touches its blackness with a gleam of white,
Deep down, and over-browed with sombre trees
Shutting its surface primly from the breeze,
The landscapes' innocent eye, set open wide
To watch the heavens,—yet with homicide
Steeped to the lids. 'Tis scarce a year ago
The latest sufferer from our rural woe
Found there his exit from a life too weak
To shield him from despairs he dared not speak.
A curious lad. I knew young Marden well,
Brought up, a farmer's son, at the plough's tail,
And used for all romance to mind the crows
At plain day-wages in his father's house.
A "natural" he, and weak in intellect,
His fellows said, nor lightly to be pricked
To industry at any useful trade.
His wits would go wool-gathering in the shade
At harvest time, when all had work on hand,

Nor, when you spoke, would seem to understand.
 At times his choice would be for days together
 To leave his work and idle in the heather,
 Making his bed where shelter could be found
 Under the fern-stacks or on open ground,
 Or oftenest in the charcoal burners' hives,
 When he could win that pity from their wives.
 Poor soul ! He needed pity for his face,
 Scarred by a burn, and reft of human grace,
 And for his speech which faltering in his head
 Made a weak babble of the words he said.
 His eyes too—what a monster's ! Did you ever
 Watch a toad's face at evening by a river
 And note the concentrated light which lies
 In the twin topazes men call his eyes ?
 Like these were Marden's. From the square of
 clay
 Which was his face, these windows of his day
 Looked out in splendour, but with a fixed stare
 Which made men start who missed the meaning
 there.

Yet he had thoughts. Not seldom he and I
Made in these woods discourse of forestry,
Walking together, I with dog and gun,
He as a beater, or, if game was none,
Marking the timber trees and underwoods.
He knew each teller in these solitudes,
And loved them with a quite unreasoned art,
Learned from no teacher but his own wild heart.
Of trees he quaintly talked in measured saws
Which seemed the decalogue of Nature's laws,
Its burden being as erst, "Thou shalt not kill"
Things made by God, which shall outlive thee
still.

For larch and fir, new comers from the North,
He pleaded scantily when their doom went forth,
Knowing they needs must die, and the birch
stems,

Since Spring renews them, yet with stratagems
Framed to delay the moment of their fate.
For beech he battled with more keen debate
Of hand and eye, in deprecating tone,

Holding their rights coeval with our own.
 But when we came to oak, good Sussex oak,
 The flame burst forth, and all his being spoke
 In words that jostled in his throat with tears,
 "An oak which might outlive a thousand years."
 He held this sacrilege. Perhaps some strains
 Of Druid blood were mingled in his veins,
 Which gave authority to guard the tree
 Sacred of yore, and thus he vanquished me.

How came he to his end, poor Marden? Well,
 All stories have their reason, as some tell,
 In Eves that give the fruit for which men grieve,
 Or, what is often worse, refuse to give.
 This last was Marden's unprotected case,
 Whose virtue failed him, and his ugliness,
 To escape the common fate of all mankind.
 He fell in love egregious and purblind,
 Just like the wisest. She who caused his flame
 Was not, I think, in honesty to blame
 If she was less than serious at his suit.

Marden, as lover, was grotesquely mute,
And his strange eyes were not the orbs to move
A maiden's fancy to a dream of love.
In truth they were scarce human. Still 'twas hard
His passion should be met, for sole reward,
With sermon phrases and such gospel talk
As preachers license for a Sunday walk,
Mixed with her laughter. This was all she gave,
An endless course of things beyond the grave,
Till he lost reckoning and, poor witless man,
Began to reason on the cosmic plan,
Which meted this scant mercy in his case,
And placed him in such straits for happiness.
Can you not see it? All our rustics live
In their small round of thoughts as in a hive,
Each cell they build resembling each each day,
Till their wits swarm, and then they are away.
Marden went mad, misled by his queen bee,
Through a deep slough of black theology,
Which ended in destruction and this pool,
With hell beyond him for his poor dumb soul.

He sought her final pity for love lost.

She talked of heaven, and sent him tracts by post.

He pleaded. She reproved. She prayed. He
swore.

She bade him go. He went, and came no more.

Such was the history, no whit uncommon.

I neither blame the boy nor blame the woman,

Only the hardness of a fate which laid

Its iron flail upon too weak a head.

She watched him go, half doubting what would
come,

Her last tract crushed betwixt his angry thumb

And his clenched fingers, and his lips grown
white,

And his eyes gleaming with their maniac light,

And so towards the hill.

That afternoon,

The last of a late autumn, saw the sun

Set in unusual splendour, (it is said

A disc of gold in a whole heaven of red),

The herald of a frost, the earliest
Known for a lifetime. There, for summer dressed,
The trees stood stiff and frozen in their green,
Belated revellers in some changing scene
Of sudden winter, and June left behind.
In all the forest was no breath of wind
For a full fortnight, nor was a leaf shed
Long after Nature in her shroud lay dead,
A beautiful black frost which held the land
In unseen fetters, but with iron hand.
The pools were frozen over in the night,
Without a flaw or ripple ; and their light
Reflected every stem of every tree
In perfect mirrors of transparency.
Boys, who a week before were in the field
With bat and ball, now ventured, iron-heeled,
On the ice, skating, yet awhile in fear,
Seeing no footing on the water there.
And thus it fell about the corpse was found—
You will have guessed it—in the ice fast bound.
Two boys, the brothers of the girl he wooed,

Tired of their pastime stopped awhile and stood
Over a shallow place where rushes grow,
And peering down saw a man's face below
Watching their own ;—his eyes were open laid,
Fixed in that terrible stare poor Marden's had—
And thought they saw a vision. Running back,
Loud in their fear, with spectres on their track,
They spread the news through all the frightened
farms,
Filling the cottagers with wild alarms,
Till some made bold with spades, and hewed
away
The ice above to where the dead man lay.
There, sure enough, was Marden, his fool's mouth
Stuffed for all solace of his sad soul's drouth
With the girl's tracts. Thus primed, he had
plunged in
And ended all, with a last deed of sin,
Grotesque and tragic as his life. No less
Let us persuaded be he rests in peace,
Or where were heaven's justice?

One last tale,

As we walk back,—of worthy Master Gale,
Our house's founder, who in a dark age
Won us the lands we hold in heritage,
Working his forge here in the civil wars,
And welding fortunes out of iron bars.
A story with a moral too, at least,
For money makers, of how wealth increased,
And most of all for us, to whom his toil
Has proved a mine of ease and endless spoil,
Though of a truth we are unlineal heirs,
Not true descendants of his toils and cares.
His history stands recorded in a book
Himself achieved, e'er Death his anvil broke,
A volume full of wisdom and God's praise,
Trust in himself, and scorn of human ways.
He was a blacksmith, born at Sevenoke
In Kent, the toilsome son of toilsome folk,
And honourable too, as honour then
Was understood among commercial men.
He paid his way through life. He owed to none

Beyond their will to let the debt run on,
Nor trusted any farther than he need.
He held the race of man a bastard breed,
An evil generation, bred of dust,
And prone to spending, idleness and lust.
God was his friend. Of Him he counsel took,
How he should make new ventures with new luck,
Praying each night continuance of health,
Increase of wisdom and increase of wealth ;
Nor ever in his yearly balance sheet
Forgot to inscribe himself in heaven's debt.
A virtuous man, and holding with good cause
The eternal justice of the social laws
Which give to industry its well-earned meed,
And leave the weak and idle to their need.
From childhood up, he clutched the staff of life,
As if it were a cudgel for the strife,
And wielded it throughout relentlessly.
His parents, brothers, all by God's decree,
Died of the plague when he was scarce sixteen.
The date, as I have reckoned, should have been

The very year the patriots raised their backs
To the new pressure of the shipping tax.
His first fight was a battle for the pence
Left by his father, when, at dire expense
Of lawyer's fees and charges without end,
He found himself with fifty pounds to spend,
And a small stock-in-trade of iron sows,
A fireless smithy and an empty house.
With these and God's compassion, and a man
To strike and blow for him, his trade began,
Till in four years his industry had grown
To a fair substance in his native town.

When he was twenty-one, an accident
Brought him to Sussex ; and, as Saul was sent
To find his father's asses and therewith
Met with a kingdom, so this honest smith,
While chasing a bad debtor through the Weald,
Lit of his fortune in this very field.
For, failing of his money, in its stead
He took his debtor's forge and smelting shed ;

Sold his goodwill at Sevenoke, and set
 His smithy in the Forest next to it.
 This brought him trade. The civil wars began
 And each man's hand was set against each man,
 And sword to sword. But, while his neighbours
 fought,
 Gale like a Gallio cared for these things nought,
 And sold his iron with indifferent zeal
 To kings and Parliaments in need of steel ;
 Or, if a prejudice his thought divides,
 It is for Cromwell and his Ironsides.
 But God's be all the glory, His alone
 Who to His servant Gale such grace had shown !

Thus in an iron age this thrifty man
 Got gold and silver, and, while others ran
 Out of their fortunes, he with pockets full
 Bought up their lands and held the world a fool.
 'Tis now two hundred years since Father Gale
 Laid down his pick and hammer. He had won
 By forty years of toil beneath the sun

The right to work no longer, for himself
And for his heirs for ever. This is Wealth !
He was a prudent buyer, and died possessed
Of some four thousand acres of the best
Land in the parish. His first purchases
Were in Worth Forest, to his vulgar eyes
I fear mere wood for burning. Pease pottage
And Frog's hole farms came next ; and in his age,
Wishing, as he says, to have a good estate
And house to live in, though the day was late
To think of building, and he most abhorred
To waste his substance upon brick and board,
Holding with prudent minds that such intent
Is but at best a "sweet impoverishment"
And that the wise man doth more soundly hit
Who turns another's folly to his wit,
He purchased Caxtons, manor and domain,
To be the home of a new race of men.

His last words, as recorded by his son,
A man of taste and letters and who won

A seat in Parliament in William's reign,
 Were uttered in the ancient Biblic strain
 Dear to the age he lived in and to him.
 They might be David's in their cadence grim.
 "When I am dead and gone," he said, "my son,
 Trust in the Lord and in none other, none.
 Be wary of thy neighbours. They are vile,
 A brood of vipers, to oppose whose guile
 I have been at constant charges all my life,
 Take thee an honest woman for thy wife,
 And get thee sons who shall inherit all
 Thy God hath given thee, spite of Adam's fall.
 Guard well thy rights, and cease not to pull down
 All gates that block thy highway to the town,
 Such as that man of Belial, Jacob Sears,
 Has set in Crawley Lane these thirty years.
 Let no man venture to enclose the wastes.
 Be on thy guard against such ribald priests
 As Lee and Troughton. They are an ill brood,
 A bastard generation, bone and blood.
 Hold fast to thy religion. Go not thou

After lewd women and the worldly show
Of rich apparel. Keep thy substance close
In thy own chamber for the fear of loss,
And thy own counsel closer, lest men find
Their way to rob thee of thy peace of mind.
But, more than all, be quit of vain pretence,
And see thy income equal thy expense,
So shalt thou have thy God with thee alway."

Thus runs the story. You have seen to-day
The latest shoot of his posterity,
The boy we left there sleeping. His shall be
One day the guardianship of this domain,
As other Gales have held it. It were vain
In me to speak of all the goodly fruit
Begotten on the stem of this old root,
This sour crab-apple, worthy master Gale.
This child perhaps . . . But that will be a
tale
For new historians.

Listen ! Did you hear
Just now, down in the valley, someone cheer
Or hail us ? Stop. Ay, there there comes a man,
Running and shouting loud as a man can.
He sees us too, and slowly through the fern
Now climbs to meet us. Something we shall
learn
Without a doubt. God grant it be not ill !
And yet he seems to falter and stand still.
What is your message, Penfold ? Why this haste ?
A little closer. Speak, man ! Here at last
You have found us. Come. What is it that you
said ?
See, we have courage.

“ Sir, the child is dead ! ”

“SED NOS QUI VIVIMUS.”

I.

How beautiful is life—the physical joy of sense
and breathing ;
The glory of the world which has found speech
and speaks to us ;
The robe which summer throws in June round the
white bones of winter ;
The new birth of each day, itself a life, a world,
a sun !

II.

I love all things that are young and happy and
eternal,
Eternal in their change and growth as I too
changing grow.
Old am I, and how many voices that I loved are
heard not !
Yet the world lives, and in its life I live and
laugh and love.

III.

I woke to-day at daybreak, thrilled with a new
sense of pleasure near me,
Because a bird sang at my window and had
ceased, afraid.
Awhile I lay and listened conscious only of my
being,
The same fool school-boy as in days gone by,
nerve, sinew, vein.

IV.

Who tells us we are changed, that we with our
wise years grow older?
I am a poet,—may be patriot, soldier, statesman,
priest.
Yet none the less I lay to-day and watched in
childish wonder
The flies tie and untie their knots, a mystery
unrevealed.

L

v.

The flies' way in the air perplexed me ever and
perplexes

No less this hour than in old time—so Solomon
the wise,

Spite of his wit, essayed in vain the riddle of the
eagles ;

And I a child to-day lay there, a child, less than
a child.

vi.

And I heard tones well-known and prudent words
and phrases ventured

Gently to chide me for hours wasted thus in
ease,

Till I too spoke and vowed aloud new ways of life
amended,

And for the thousandth time in pain arraigned
and blamed my dreams.

VII.

Then I rose hastily, as one who hears and fears
reproving,

Although, God help me, there is living none
now dares to chide or blame,

And I broke through the curtain of the dusk, and
from the orient

The sun's face through the window smiled, the
lord of a new day.

VIII.

How dare I grieve in the fair presence of the lord
of morning?

How dare I not rejoice who thus its king in
Eden reign?

God's peace is on this place proclaimed, and named,
and promised,

A sentient joy of living things which fills and
thrills the earth.

IX.

Here all things joyous are. Birds breed in sedge
and thicket ;

Hares feed in pairs, and squirrels leap from spray
to spray ;

Dead limbs of elms make nests for the woodpeckers ;

The coots' cry from the mere comes loud and
tells of rain.

X.

Naught here may harm or hurt. This is a
sanctuary

For the world's weak, hedged in with love and
fenced and sealed—

Man its sole outcast, the earth's mad disturber
branded

Still with the mark of Cain and death from
which life flees.

XI.

Thus musing in my pride, and shame too somewhat, I descended,

Led by invisible hands towards the trees and fields below.

Along these self-same paths my childhood ran exulting,

Following the poor lost dead who loved them as I love.

XII.

What was their pride then in their leafy fair possession,

Theirs in their day, who planned these glades and thickets round !

How has their presence vanished from the silent pastures,

The poor lost dead who held my hand and loved them as I love !

XIII.

Yet not to mourn I came. No day of joy destroyed deserves our anguish.

Pleasure's whole soul is this, to feel the living stream which flows.

That which they did I do. In me they live unvanquished.

My voice is theirs to-day, my step their step, my soul their soul.

XIV.

For them I live ungrieving, and ungrieved their fruit I gather

From trees they planted bravely in their pride of life and time.

They fashioned these old gardens. Let my soul their joy inherit,

Their passion heaped on passion, life on life, for my life's prize.

XV.

Who were they all? Some names they bore well-
known, some others fameless.

A box of parchments yellow lies in the dull
dust of age ;

A few poor letters, written by fond hands to
fonder faces ;

Through all the passionate love of home, this
home of mine, once theirs.

XVI.

The primæval tiller of the soil enjoyed, the soil
ancestral—

Whence came he? What his lineage? Nay, 'tis
hidden. Some have told

Tales of high daring done, lands won, through
lines remote descending

From old Norse sources and the potent loins of
kings and gods ;

XVII.

Or, with less pomp, of armoured knights, when
 knights were held heroic,
 Of prudent counsellors and priests and men
 revered for law,
 Dim-featured ghosts of vanished names set in for-
 gotten story,
 Pleading for memory still of their last son through
 years of change.

XVIII.

And yet I know not. Truth and fable here are
 strangely blended.
 Nay, rather let me set before my face in fancy
 one
 Like to myself, a clod of Sussex earth more kindly
 kneaded,
 And mostly noble through the love of right the
 sense of wrong.

XIX.

I see him stand beneath these pollard oaks, the
same, hard-handed,
With hook, and axe, and bill, a wrestler with
the forest's green,
A man grave-featured, dull of thought and wit,
slow-paced, unyielding,
Stern in his toil and niggard still of smile and
sign and speech.

XX.

The woodland round him a vast sea was then,
whose scattered islands
Were these few acres conquered hardly by men
whole of heart,
Spite of the demons and wild spectral elves that
held the forest
And deadly dragons haunting still in guile the
undrained morass.

XXI.

Who knows? a servant he, may be, of our good
 saint and patron,
 The cloistered friar, who for his life-long penance
 vowed and done,
 And for some monsters slain, had claimed in sole
 reward and guerdon
 The wood birds' silence round him while he
 made his prayer at noon.

XXII.

How have the birds grown jubilant once more in
 song and Godless,
 In these unchastened days when men have ceased
 to kneel or pray !
 This peasant knelt in faith. The world to him
 had nothing joyous.
 Death, like a spectre, dogged him close with fears
 of heaven and hell.

XXIII.

And yet he loved these lands. Here haply a
strange breadth of freedom
Was from all lords and kings by reason of the
forest fear.
What warrior dared to search these "antres vast and
desarts idle"
For such poor scattered few freeholders as its
fastness held?

XXIV.

The Roman, Dane and Norman from the Down,
their distant eerie,
Looked forth, but only looked. The swamps
of trackless mire
Clogged all their chariot wheels who dared by
force of arms to venture
With horse and spear and rider through these
perilous bogs accursed.

XXV.

And thus he lived and died, unknown to all, un-
 tamed, unlorded,
 This silent first forefather of the paternal woods
 reclaimed,
 Holding his place beneath the sun with sullen
 desperate caution
 On the square plot of up-turned acres that his
 spade had made.

XXVI.

Lives there in me his son still something of his
 hardy sinew,
 Something of his heroic soul? Still darkly arched
 o'erhead
 The forest speaks to me, its child. I hoard and
 count and reckon
 As my birth's right and prize these lands and
 look askance at men.

XXVII.

Deep in my soul he lies. Nor less the rest, the
the crew penurious
Of careful tillers, holding gold achieved more
dear than ease,
The covetous of farms, still grimly set through
generations
To add their store of value won to the ancestral
fields.

XXVIII.

The wealth they made that day is mine, the glades
reclaimed, the hamlets,
The treasure of the earth deep delved in reigns
Plantagenet,
The store of iron ore heaped high for needs of
civil battle,
When men in armour trod the flying heels of
armèd men.

XXIX.

Some gathered fortune boldly daring. Truce then
to the forest.

Some spent their store in lordly wassail, brawl-
ing and lewd wine.

What anger was twixt neighbours there, twixt sire
and son what contest !

What bonds usurious countersigned enriched the
hands of guile !

XXX.

Still in their stubbornness of blood they stood, these
my own fathers,

Through whom the thread of life, a feeble cord
by fortune spun

And loosed upon Time's tempest, to their latest
born descended,

And with the life the lands redeemed which thus
unshorn he loves.

XXXI.

Justice, and squire, and clerk, and graduate of
humaner letters !

Here history spreads her written page for certain
truth to record.

On these green lawns rose novel shapes, trim walks
and classic gardens,

Decked with Italian forms in stone of nymph
and faun and god.

XXXII.

Thus was I born. And lo, their golden leaves re-
newed each summer

The oak trees weave for me as them, sublimely,
blindly dumb,

Holding their secrets closely shut, nor even to my
cunning

Yielding a word but this, alas for thee ! and woe
for man !

XXXIII.

Woe for his valour, woe for thine ! Time still shall
all things vanquish,
Folly and virtue, lusts of youth, mad griefs, sub-
lime designs,
The courage of high manhood feebly striving and
then failing.
Yonder behold the churchyard is, heaped high
with thy own kind.

XXXIV.

Here I broke off, in sudden exclamation loud dis-
claiming
This new insistence of my foolish soul's disease
of grief.
The day's work calls me, to my soul I said, a day
of labour,
Or only laboured idleness yet clear at least of
tears.

XXXV.

Therewith I turned the latch before me of the low
cow's-stable,
Where, with her udders full and lowing loud to
hear me near,
Stood my cow Myrtle, large eyed, moon faced,
brindle-hided, patient,
Waiting my footstep on the path which every
morn she hears.

XXXVI.

What does she meditate on all things, brute,
divine and human,
This mild-eyed mother? She too loves the knee-
deep fields she knows
With the same reasonless desire and natural greed
of longing,
And this between us hidden deep is a strong
bond of love.

XXXVII.

Her pulses can beat wildly too with rage and
subtle passion

When from her herd she strays. And once each
Spring, with fortune cloyed,

For a brief month she knows all heaven's love and
rapturous pleasure,

Fondling the thing new born, which is her own,
her soul, her joy.

XXXVIII.

I love to touch the links of life between us, the
blind kindness

Of joy unreasoned, solace in the sun, in shade
delight.

The unhuman part of Man is still the best, his love
of children,

His love of meads and vales at home, his fond-
ness for his kind.

XXXIX.

Let me extenuate naught in thought, nor set down
aught in malice.

Here, Myrtle, is that thing thou lovest best, thy
feed of corn.

Give me in turn thy peace of soul, peace passing
understanding,

Thy trust each vain sweet day renewed sublime
in Man thy god.

* * * * *

XL.

How beautiful is life, the conscious power of
thought in action,

The brain's imperious will commanding fate
within its sphere !

Around it the world's forces, prisoned Jinns, obey
the magician,

Tamed and constrained for his delight their
allotted tasks to weave.

XLI.

And what were life unlabouring, life even here in
 this dear Eden,
 Were there no toil? Eternal perfectness in idle
 round
Is God's sole lot to taste, not ours whom rage of
 hope possesses
 And Time disturbs with tales of change, and
 dark oblivion goads.

XLII.

Our actions are our monument. The prince in
 slaughtered thousands
 Carves his red name on fields of war that he may
 sounder sleep.
The Statesman fashions high his sluggard pride to
 patriot glories
 That he may lie entombed with kings while
 kings and kingdoms grieve.

XLIII.

The prophet as of old speaks, “ Rise, ye mourners,
from your bondage,
Get ye from hence and flee away afar lest evil
come ;
Behold, the Lord shall lead you forth through
deserts to new pastures,
Thus shall ye do, and thus,” and he too sleeps
his sleep with God.

XLIV.

Nor less the poet. Chosen to sing of an Eternal
beauty,
Dares he be silent in his day and leave his tale
untold ?
How shall he wait on, idly, he a hireling without
wages,
Lest in the night untried of toil he wake and cry
aloud ?

XLV.

There is a record given him he must needs in
deeds accomplish,
A tale of transient things his eyes have seen, his
ears have heard ;
And he a traitor were if dying dumb they too should
vanish,
And fill the forgotten lapses lost of the unnum-
bered years ;

XLVI.

Memories of times departed, each hour filled to
the brim with promise ;
Voices how sweet of human souls whose dreams
are with them laid ;
Echoes of laughters fraught with tears since joy has
turned to sorrow ;
Footsteps of dancing feet long gone to rest where
grasses wave ;

XLVII.

Tender, sad vows of women, how passionately
appealing
To eyes they loved, nor deeming day nor night
itself too long
For their blest service, sieging heaven amain in vain
for pity,
And holding earth and fate too strait for their
wide arms of love ;

XLVIII.

Manly ambitions, vast as the high arch unspanned
of heaven ;
Schemes of impossible good for Man, made
naught by human fraud ;
Follies of valiant hearts cast forth upon the die of
battle ;
Hopes of a world destroyed, made void through
human greed of gold.

XLIX.

I too have dreamed a dream which I would fain
 essay to interpret,
 A dream of infinite love, which, if my hour of
 wit were proved,
Should stand my message to the world, a voice of
 power for ever,
 Binding the generations new to the past ages
 dumb.

L.

How should I speak it best, in what high tones of
 full-voiced reason
 Holding the souls of all? No idle lapse of empty
 sounds
Should cloy the hearing of the earth grown deaf to
 alien passion,
 No clamour of vain sobs, no throbs, no formless
 dirge of words.

LI.

But the true sculpture of a thought, clean cut and
plain of meaning,
Marble made life, with sinewy phrase and
knotted argument,
And that deep-throated resonant voice which in
the morn of Egypt
Spoke through her Memnon's lips to all, and all
a nation heard.

LII.

This should be prophecy—nay, judgment. But
with less, if granted,
Well were I winged for song, and luminous so
in thought should move
With the world's teachers, bards whose chosen
strings have nobly chaunted
Hymns of heroic heaven or only this of human
love.

LIII.

Only that tragedy of hope, which in its full expansion

Has never yet been told, the history of a human soul

From its first outlook with blank eyes upon a world of shadows

To its last blank farewell in tears upon a world of scorn ;

LIV.

The very truth of childhood, with its fears and tribulations,

Hushed into sudden smiles and sleep by what unreasoning change ;

The wherefore and the why of its first bursts of causeless laughter ;

The meaning of its griefs untold, the sense of its first pain ;

LV.

And boyhood's early trust, thrust forth to the chill
winds of schooling,
Learning the bitterness of life through divers
ways of loss,
Wasting the freshness of its joys on noise, its first
compassion
On its own wounded back, till, turning, it too
grasps the rod ;

LVI.

And youth's high hope, with painted dreams of all
potential pleasure,
Doubting which way to spring, the paths of
honour leading here,
There of delight, each robed with morning's virginal
new vesture
And beautiful with tears of love, though who
should call them tears?

LVII.

And manhood with its wars; and middle life as
 yet unvanquished,
 When strength is tried and, having learned
 through grief the nobler roads
 Of the world's glory, he beholds life-settled pur-
 pose, standing
 Calm with his fate, and seems to touch at last
 the ulterior goal;

LVIII.

And then the pang which strikes, and the swift
 end. All these, in sequence,
 Would I set forth in words, tragic, severe, and
 each should breathe
 Of a new beauty, shade and light, blue skies,
 white clouds and tempests,
 Mountain and vale and plain and stream, and,
 circling all, Death's sea.

* * * * *

LIX.

How beautiful is life ! The present sense of souls
that love us ;

The enfolding spirit of love, made known in
divers silent ways ;

The wife, the child, the man and maid, whose
zeal and faith enthrone us

High in their temple niche enshrined ! Thus
angels serving stand.

LX.

What need we of more love, of larger fields re-
vealed of conquest,

Who all things have that heaven itself in its re-
ward might deal ?

What need we of new life, who touch the goal
supreme of fortune,

Holding to-day for prize the perfect love that
casts out fear ?

LXI.

Come with me, child, who art myself, only a self
grown dearer,

One that I dare to love and without shame, for
thou art mine.

What shall our pleasure be to-day, our daily task
being ended ?

Take thou a counsel of thy joy. Be thou my
pleasure's guide.

LXII.

Speak. Shall we make our visitation of the woods
and forests ?

The midsummer shoot is there ; and in their
nuptial robes of green

The oak trees murmur to the flies their tale of full-
blown summer,

And, where the stems were felled in Spring, the
foxgloves point their spears.

LXIII.

Or to the paddocks, deep in green for grazing steer
and heifer,
And, what we better love, those creatures of a
nobler mould,
Which are fair Nature's masterpiece and last
supreme perfection,
Mares with their unweaned foals high-souled in
proud descent of blood.

LXIV.

Or rather—let the indulgence to our idle souls be
granted—
Lapped in the summer heat, without more toil
than this of dreams,
On the lake's bosom moored, where birch and
alder cast their shadows,
Sit we and woo, hours through, with rod and
line the mistrustful bream.

LXV.

Here the boat lies, half hidden she, where three
 weeks since we left her,
 In her snug dog-wood nook. The rushes round
 have bound her in
 Already in their net. But we will free and float
 and set her,
 An ark for our new fortunes launched, to bear
 us where we will.

LXVI.

See, there she swims. Our noise in loosing her has
 roused a heron,
 And with him teals and lapwings, with a cry of
 swift alarm.
 Ah Man ! thy hated face disturbs once more thy
 natural fellows,
 What is thy kingship worth to thee if all things
 fly thy hand ?

LXVII.

The evil done is done, alas ! Let us indulge our
laughter,

Dear Hester, sing to me that song the foolish
fishes heard

When you deceived them to their hurt by your un-
real assurance

Telling of captive birds set free—the while the
nets we spread.

LXVIII.

Sing me a song, while I the happy oars in listless
measure

Ply looking at your face, and presently, when it
is done,

You shall hear stories told of far-off lands and
strange adventures,

Things that your father saw e'er you to give him
joy were born ;

LXIX.

Tales of great mountains where he set his steps in
 early manhood,
 Not hills like ours, but craggy pinnacles that
 pierce the clouds,
 Abysmal valleys and white slopes of treacherous
 ice, whose foothold
 Failed as in dreams men fail and fall, and urged
 him headlong down,

LXX.

Falling for ever—ever—and yet saved by inter-
 vention,
 On the extreme curve's edge, of a miraculous
 softer snow,
 Wherein he bedded lay with beating heart till the
 slow rescue
 Gravely descending came at length, and bore him
 scatheless home ;

LXXI.

Or of the unlimited fields revealed of grey Arabian
desert,

Where are no streams or shade, but only the
blind haze of noon,

And the sun strikes with might, and the skins
shrink which hold his blessing,

The dole of water spared, his forfeit life if these
be gone.

LXXII.

Drear and untenanted. Yet see the sudden trans-
formation

When the Spring rains have come ! In every vale
and hollow there

Cattle unnumbered pasture knee-deep down in
purple blossoms,

And the calf-camels prance, and their dams
roar like souls in pain.

LXXIII.

Or of days spent alone and nights in far Brazilian
forests,

Where sky and earth itself are lost in insolent
depths of green.

High overhead the laden tree-tops touch the ex-
tremest heaven,

Leading through latticed walls of flowers and
veils deep-dripped with dew.

LXXIV.

The impenetrable shadows vast of that shut place
of silence

How are they broken by the sheen and glint of
insect wings,

Bright coloured lamps slow flitting ! Lo from the
impervious thicket

A blaze of blue, a butterfly, bursts flashing
through the trees.

LXXV.

Or last, of the vast hum of a tumultuous Indian
city,

Where street and bridge are thronged with men
who sell and buy and cry,

And women with bright eyes half veiled pass bear-
ing flowers and incense,

Through the tall temple gates set wide, to gods
in ochreous shrines.

LXXVI.

Strange wonderful and vast, till you forget the im-
mediate beauty,

The home we love, our little raptures over joys
well known,

This lake, these woods, this boat, the brook which
tells of English summer

With its mad bubbles dancing and its hazel foam
wind-borne,

LXXVII.

And all that was and is to fill our souls with their
contentment

From dawn to dusk. And so in joy this latest
evening ends.

God grant us length of days, of days like these to
be remembered

Till life's last night has come and we too gathered
are in death !—

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